THE NEW POETRY

AN ANTHOLOGY

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OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY VERSE IN ENGLISH

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AN ANTHOLOGY

OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY VERSE IN ENGLISH

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

EDITED BY

HARRIET MONROE

EDITOR OF *Poetry : A Magazine of Verse*

AND

ALICE CORBIN HENDERSON

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INTRODUCTION

During the last three or four years there has been a remarkable renascence of poetry in both America and England, and an equally extraordinary revival of public interest in the art.

The editors of this anthology wish to present in convenient form representative work of the poets who are today creating what is commonly called "the new poetry"—a phrase no doubt rash and most imperfectly descriptive, since the new in art is always the elder old, but one difficult to replace with any form of words more exact. Much newspaper controversy, and a number of special magazines, testify to the demand for such a book; also many letters to the editors of *Poetry* asking for information—letters not only from individual lovers of the art, but also from college professors and literary clubs or groups, who have begun to feel that the poetry of today is a vital force no longer to be ignored. Indeed, many critics feel that poetry is coming nearer than either the novel or the drama to the actual life of our time. The magazine *Poetry*, ever since its foundation in October, 1912, has encouraged this new spirit in the art, and the anthology is a further effort on the part of its editors to present the new spirit to the public.

What is the new poetry? and wherein does it differ from the old? The difference is not in mere details of form, for much poetry infused with the new spirit conforms to the old measures and rhyme-schemes. It is not merely in diction, though the truly modern poet rejects the so-called "poetic" shifts of language—the *deems*, *'neaths*, *forsooths*, etc., the inversions and high-sounding rotundities, familiar to his predecessors: all the rhetorical excesses through which most Victorian poetry now seems "over-appareled," as a speaker at a *Poetry* dinner—a lawyer, not a poet—put it in pointing out what the new movement is aiming at. These things are important, but the difference goes deeper than details of form, strikes through them to fundamental integrities.

The new poetry strives for a concrete and immediate realization of life; it would discard the theory, the abstraction, the remoteness, found in all classics not of the first order. It is less vague, less

verbose, less eloquent, than most poetry of the Victorian period and much work of earlier periods. It has set before itself an ideal of absolute simplicity and sincerity—an ideal which implies an individual, unstereotyped diction; and an individual, unstereotyped rhythm. Thus inspired, it becomes intensive rather than diffuse. It looks out more eagerly than in; it becomes objective. The term "exteriority" has been applied to it, but this is incomplete. In presenting the concrete object or the concrete environment, whether these be beautiful or ugly, it seeks to give more precisely the emotion arising from them, and thus widens immeasurably the scope of the art.

All this implies no disrespect for tradition. The poets of today do not discard tradition because they follow the speech of today rather than that of Shakespeare's time, or strive for organic rhythm rather than use a mold which has been perfected by others. On the contrary, they follow the great tradition when they seek a vehicle suited to their own epoch and their own creative mood, and resolutely reject all others.

Great poetry has always been written in the language of contemporary speech, and its theme, even when legendary, has always borne a direct relation with contemporary thought, contemporary imaginative and spiritual life. It is this direct relation which the more progressive modern poets are trying to restore. In this effort they discard not only archaic diction but also the shop-worn subjects of past history or legend, which have been through the centuries a treasure-trove for the second-rate.

This effort at modern speech, simplicity of form, and authentic vitality of theme, is leading our poets to question the authority of the accepted laws of English verse, and to study other languages, ancient and modern, in the effort to find out what poetry really is. It is a strange fact that, in the common prejudice of cultivated people during the four centuries from just before 1400 to just before 1800, nothing was accepted as poetry in English that did not walk in the iambic measure. Bits of Elizabethan song and of Dryden's two musical odes, both beating four-time instead of the iambic three, were outlandish intrusions too slight to count. To write English poetry, a man must measure his paces according to the iambic foot-rule; and he must mark off his lines with rhymes, or at least marshal them in the pentameter movement of blank verse.

The first protest against this prejudice, which long usage had hardened into law, came in the persons of four or five great poets—Burns, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron—who puzzled the ears of their generation with anapæsts and other four-time measures, and who carried into their work a certain immediacy of feeling and imagery—a certain modern passion of life—which even Cowper, Thompson and a few others of their time, though they had written of things around them, had scarcely attained. Quarterly critics and London moralists blinked and gasped, but at last the bars had to go down for these great radicals. And before long the extreme virtuosity of Swinburne had widened still further the musical range of the English language.

By the time Whitman appeared, the ear of the average reader—that formidable person—was attuned to anapæsts, dactyls, choriambics, sapphics, rhymed or unrhymed. He could not call them by name, but he was docile to all possible intricacies of pattern in any closely woven metrical scheme. But Whitman gave him a new shock. Here was a so-called poet who discarded all traditional patterns, and wove a carpet of his own. Once more the conservatives protested: was this poetry? and, if so, why? If poetry was not founded on the long-accepted metrical laws, then how could they distinguish it from prose, and thus keep the labels and catalogues in order? What was Whitman's alleged poetry but a kind of freakish prose, invented to set forth a dangerous anarchistic philosophy?

It would take too long to analyze the large rhythms of Whitman's free verse; but the mere fact that he wrote free verse and called it poetry, and that other poets—men like Rossetti, Swinburne, Symonds, even the reluctant Emerson—seemed to agree that it was poetry, this fact alone was, in the opinion of the conservatives, a challenge to four centuries of English poets. And this challenge, repeated by later poets, compels us to inquire briefly into the origins of English poetry, in the effort to get behind and underneath the instinctive prejudice that English poetry, to be poetry, must conform to prescribed metres.

Chaucer, great genius that he was, an aristocrat by birth and breeding, and a democrat by feeling and sympathy—Chaucer may have had it in his power to turn the whole stream of English poetry into either the French or the Anglo-Saxon channel. Knowing and

loving the old French epics better than the Norse sagas, he naturally chose the French channel, and he was so great and so beloved that his world followed him. Thus there was no longer any question—the iambic measure and rhyme, both dear to the French-trained ears of England's Norman masters, became fixed as the standard type of poetic form.

But it was possibly a toss-up—the scale hung almost even in that formative fourteenth century. If Chaucer's contemporary Langland—the great democrat, revolutionist, mystic—had had Chaucer's authority and universal sympathy, English poetry might have followed his example instead of Chaucer's; and Shakespeare, Milton and the rest might have been impelled by common practice to use—or modify—the curious, heavy, alliterative measure of *Piers Ploughman*, which now sounds so strange to our ears:

In a somer seson,
When softe was the sonne,
I shoop me into shroudes
As I a sheep weere;
In habite as an heremite
Unholy of werkes,
Wente wide in this world
Wondres to here.

Though we must rejoice that Chaucer prevailed with his French forms, Langland reminds us that poetry—even English poetry—is older than rhyme, older than the iambic measure, older than all the metrical patterns which now seem so much a part of it. If our criticism is to have any value, it must insist upon the obvious truth that poetry existed before the English language began to form itself out of the débris of other tongues, and that it now exists in forms of great beauty among many far-away peoples who never heard of our special rules.

Perhaps the first of these disturbing influences from afar to be felt in modern English poetry was the Celtic renascence, the wonderful revival of interest in old Irish song, which became manifest in translations and adaptations of the ancient Gaelic lyrics and epics, made by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Douglas Hyde and others.

This influence was most powerful because it came to us directly,

not at second-hand, through the English work of two poets of genius, Synge and Yeats. These great men, fortified and inspired by the simplicity and clarity of primitive Celtic song, had little patience with the "over-appareled" art of Tennyson and his imitators. They found it stiffened by rhetoric, by a too conscious morality leading to pulpit eloquence, and by second-hand bookish inspirations; and its movement they found hampered, thwarted of freedom, by a too slavish acceptance of ready-made schemes of metre and rhyme. The surprises and irregularities, found in all great art because they are inherent in human feeling, were being ruled out of English poetry, which consequently was stiffening into forms too fixed and becoming more and more remote from life. As Mr. Yeats said in Chicago:

"We were weary of all this. We wanted to get rid not only of rhetoric but of poetic diction. We tried to strip away everything that was artificial, to get a style like speech, as simple as the simplest prose, like a cry of the heart."

It is scarcely too much to say that "the new poetry"—if we may be allowed the phrase—began with these two great Irish masters. Think what a contrast to even the simplest lyrics of Tennyson the pattern of their songs presents, and what a contrast their direct outright human feeling presents to the somewhat culture-developed optimism of Browning, and the science-inspired pessimism of Arnold. Compared with these Irishmen the best of their predecessors seem literary. This statement does not imply any measure of ultimate values, for it is still too early to estimate them. One may, for example, believe Synge to be the greatest poet-playwright in English since Shakespeare, and one of the great poets of the world; but a few more decades must pass before such ranking can have authority.

At the same time other currents were influencing progressive minds toward even greater freedom of form. Strangely enough, Whitman's influence was felt first in France. It reached England, and finally America, indirectly from Paris, where the poets, stimulated by translations of the great American, especially Bazalgette's, and by the ever-adventurous quality of French scholarship, have been experimenting with free verse ever since Mallarmé. The great Irish poets felt the French influence—it was part of the education which made them realize that English poetry had be-

come narrow, rigid, and insular. Yeats has held usually, though never slavishly, to rhyme and a certain regularity of metrical form—in which, however, he makes his own tunes; but Synge wrote his plays in that wide borderland between prose and verse, in a form which, whatever one calls it, is essentially poetry, for it has passion, glamour, magic, rhythm, and glorious imaginative life.

This borderland between prose and verse is being explored now as never before in English; except, perhaps in the King James translation of the Bible. The modern "vers-libertines," as they have been wittily called, are doing pioneer work in an heroic effort to get rid of obstacles that have hampered the poet and separated him from his audience. They are trying to make the modern manifestations of poetry less a matter of rules and formulæ, and more a thing of the spirit, and of organic as against imposed rhythm. In this enthusiastic labor they are following not only a strong inward impulse, not only the love of freedom which Chaucer followed—and Spenser and Shakespeare, Shelley and Coleridge and all the masters—but they are moved also by influences from afar. They have studied the French *symbolistes* of the 'nineties, and the most recent Parisian *vers-libristes*. Moreover, some of them have listened to the pure lyricism of the Provençal troubadours, have examined the more elaborate mechanism of early Italian sonneteers and canzonists, have read Greek poetry from a new angle of vision; and last, but perhaps most important of all, have bowed to winds from the East.

In the nineteenth century the western world—the western æsthetic world—discovered the orient. Someone has said that when Perry knocked at the gates of Japan, these opened, not to let us in, but to let the Japanese out. Japanese graphic art, especially, began almost at once to kindle progressive minds. Whistler, of course, was the first great creative artist to feel the influence of their instinct for balance and proportion, for subtle harmonies of color and line, for the integrity of beauty in art as opposed to the moralizing and sentimental tendencies which had been intruding more and more.

Poetry was slower than the graphic arts to feel the oriental influence, because of the barrier of language. But European scholarship had long dabbled with Indian, Persian and Sanskrit literatures, and Fitzgerald even won over the crowd to some remote suspicion

of their beauty by meeting Omar half-way, and making a great poem out of the marriage, not only of two minds, but of two literary traditions. Then a few airs from Japan blew in—a few translations of *hokku* and other forms—which showed the stark simplicity and crystal clarity of the art among Japanese poets. And of late the search has gone further: we begin to discover a whole royal line of Chinese poets of a thousand or more years ago; and we are trying to search out the secrets of their delicate and beautiful art. The task is difficult, because our poets, ignorant of Chinese, have to get at these masters through the literal translations of scholars. But even by this round-about way, poets like Allen Upward, Ezra Pound, Helen Waddell and a few others, give us something of the rare flavor, the special exquisite perfume, of the original. And of late the Indian influence has been emphasized by the great Bengali poet and sage, Rabindranath Tagore, whose mastery of English makes him a poet in two languages.

This oriental influence is to be welcomed because it flows from deep original streams of poetic art. We should not be afraid to learn from it; and in much of the work of the imagists, and other radical groups, we find a more or less conscious, and more or less effective, yielding to that influence. We find something of the oriental directness of vision and simplicity of diction, also now and then a hint of the unobtrusive oriental perfection of form and delicacy of feeling.

All these influences, which tend to make the art of poetry, especially poetry in English, less provincial, more cosmopolitan, are by no means a defiance of the classic tradition. On the contrary, they are an endeavor to return to it at its great original sources, and to sweep away artificial laws—the *obiter dicta* of secondary minds—which have encumbered it. There is more of the great authentic classic tradition, for example, in the *Spoon River Anthology* than in the *Idylls of the King*, *Balaustian's Adventure*, and *Sohrab and Rustum* combined. And the free rhythms of Whitman, Mallarmé, Pound, Sandburg and others, in their inspired passages, are more truly in line with the biblical, the Greek, the Anglo-Saxon, and even the Shakespearean tradition, than all the exact iambics of Dryden and Pope, the patterned alexandrines of Racine, or the closely woven metrics of Tennyson and Swinburne.

Whither the new movement is leading no one can tell with

exactness, nor which of its present manifestations in England and America will prove permanently valuable. But we may be sure that the movement is toward greater freedom of spirit and form, and a more enlightened recognition of the international scope, the cosmopolitanism, of the great art of poetry, of which the English language, proud as its record is, offers but a single phase. As part of such a movement, even the most extravagant experiments, the most radical innovations, are valuable, for the moment at least, as an assault against prejudice. And some of the radicals of today will be, no doubt, the masters of tomorrow—a phenomenon common in the history of the arts.

It remains only to explain the plan of this anthology, its inclusions and omissions.

It has seemed best to include no poems published before 1900, even though, as in a few cases, the poets were moved by the new impulses. For example, those two intensely modern, nobly impassioned, lyric poets, Emily Dickinson and the Shropshire Lad (Alfred Edward Housman)—the one dead, the other fortunately still living—both belong, by date of publication, to the 'nineties. The work of poets already, as it were, enshrined by fame and death has also not been quoted: poets whose works are already, in a certain sense, classics, and whose books are treasured by all lovers of the art—like Synge and Moody and Riley, too early gone from us.

Certain other omissions are more difficult to explain, because they may be thought to imply a lack of consideration which we do not feel. The present Laureate, Robert Bridges, even in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties, was led by his own personal taste, especially in his *Shorter Poems*, toward austere simplicity of subject, diction and style. But his most representative poems were written before 1900. Rudyard Kipling has been inspired at times by the modern muse, but his best poems also antedate 1900. This is true also of Louise Imogen Guiney and Bliss Carman, though most of their work, like that of Arthur Symons and the late Stephen Phillips and Anna Hempstead Branch, belongs, by its affinities, to the earlier period.

On the other hand, we have tried to be hospitable to the adventurous, the experimental, because these are the qualities of

pioneers, who look forward, not backward, and who may lead on, further than we can see as yet, to new domains of the ever-conquering spirit of beauty.

NOTE. *A word about the typography of this volume. No rigid system of lineation, indention, etc., has been imposed upon the poets who very kindly lend us their work. For example, sonnets are printed with or without indention according to the individual preference of the poet; also other rhymed forms, such as quatrains rhyming alternately; as well as various forms of free verse. Punctuation and spelling are more uniform, although a certain liberty has been conceded in words like* gray *or* grey, *the color of which seems to vary with the spelling, and in the use of dots, dashes, commas, colons, etc.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESENT EDITION

The first edition of *The New Poetry* was prepared in 1916, and published the following February. The present edition aims simply to add to that collection of twentieth-century verse in English the most significant work of the period which has passed since the book first appeared.

The plan of the book, therefore, is to represent each poet of the first edition, with a few exceptions, by his former group, adding, in certain cases, such of his later poems as may seem best to suggest his later mood and manner; and to insert new names in their proper alphabetical order. In the case of two poets, however, this arrangement has to be waived: Mr. Witter Bynner requests a rearrangement of his group, old and new; and Mr. Conrad Aiken exacts the omission of the three early poems which have hitherto represented him, and restricts the editors' choice to a list which excludes two coveted Senlin monologues, these having been, in his opinion, "too much anthologized."

In considering the make-up of this edition, the editors have been compelled to put aside two temptations. The first was the temptation to disregard certain limitations mentioned in the introduction to the first edition—limitations drawn by time and death—in order to trace the beginnings of the modern movement wherever the quest might lead.

It might have led us even to Blake. Obviously it would have led us to Whitman, though we might legitimately have refrained from quoting so great a master, so ancestral a revolutionist. But we should have been compelled to represent generously such nineteenth-century moderns as Emily Dickinson, Gerard Hopkins and Stephen Crane; to acknowledge the new austerities practiced by the Celtic group of poets during the 'nineties; to admit a deviation from the Victorian tone and manner in a few poets of the closing century, like Robert Bridges, Wilfred Blunt, and the Shropshire Lad (A. E. Housman); to pay tribute to Rudyard Kipling's easy fling in mod-

ern balladry, and to his incisive directness in certain later poems: and possibly even to point out wherein some of the Victorians, especially Robert Browning and Christina Rossetti, were prophetic of change in certain poems. Also we should have had to revoke our omission of such twentieth-century poets now "enshrined by death" as Synge and Moody and Riley—the first a modern triumphantly, but greater as playwright than as lyrist; the others leading toward the more recent groups in certain aspects of their art.

We were tempted especially by three nineteenth-century poets who were unfairly obscure in their day and who really belong in "the new movement." Two of them were singularly reticent—both Emily Dickinson and Gerard Hopkins waited for posthumous publication. But the former achieved a vivid directness and compactness worthy of the imagists, as well as a very personal technique which searched for hidden, rather than obvious delicacies of assonance and rhythm; as in many poems like this one on despair:

> The difference between despair
> And fear, is like the one
> Between the instant of a wreck
> And when the wreck has been!
>
> The mind is smooth—no motion—
> Contented as the eye
> Upon the forehead of a bust,
> That knows it cannot see.

And this poem shows the intensity of her spiritual life:

> There is a solitude of space,
> A solitude of sea,
> A solitude of death; but these
> Society shall be
> Compared with that profounder site,
> That polar privacy,
> A Soul admitted to Itself:
> Finite Infinity.

Hopkins, in his Jesuit seclusion, worked out a deeply original metric pattern, capable of exquisitely rich, subtle and flexible modulations, though always thoroughly controlled. In certain poems he presented an impressionistic rush of splendor, a veritable tumble of gorgeous colors and sounds, as different from Swinburne's smooth expansive patterns as Tschaikowsky is different from Chopin. Almost any of his poems would carry conviction of the essential modernness of this priest who could ring adjectives like a chime of bells in such lines as—

> Tatter-tassel-tangled and dingle-a-dangled
> Dandy-hung dainty head.

We quote a passage from *The Leaden Echo*, a maiden's plaint, to show his luxuriant style and his "terrible immediacy of utterance":

How to keep—is there any any, is there none such, nowhere known
some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . from vanishing away?
Oh, is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles deep,
Down? no waving-off of these most mournful messengers, still messengers, sad and stealing messengers of grey?
No, there's none, there's none—oh no, there's none!
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair—
Do what you may do, what, do what you may,
And wisdom is early to despair:
Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done
To keep at bay
Age and age's evils—hoar hair,
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay;
So be beginning, be beginning to despair.
Oh there's none—no no no, there's none:
Be beginning to despair, to despair,
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

And here is the beautiful sonnet, *God's Grandeur:*

The world is charged with grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And, for all this, nature is never spent—
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went,
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs:
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with—ah!—bright wings.

The modern mood of Stephen Crane was perhaps more militant. Taking a hint possibly from Yone Noguchi, he printed during the later 'nineties two books of free-verse poems which challenged the established metrical order and were not without influence in beginning a new fashion. Most of them sound a bit sententious today; the best is the passionately ironic *War is Kind:*

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight—
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them;
Great is the battle-god, great—and his kingdom
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing,
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Synge's few poems have influenced "the movement," by their hard simplicity, toward a more direct attack and a more vital imaginative speech. Still more his plays, by the marvellous lyricism of their rhythmic dialogue, derived from the speech-rhythms of a primitive people, have taught many lessons to modern poets. Probably this great Irishman has ended forever the long reign of Elizabethan blank verse in English dramatic poetry; and has given aid and comfort to all the groups of present-day poets who are trying to study anew the rhythmic bases and resources of the language.

But we need not repeat what was said of the Celtic group and of other influences in the original introduction to this volume. By the time Synge died, in 1909, Edwin Arlington Robinson had published two or three books of stringent poems; in 1909 Ezra Pound's *Personæ* appeared in London, and three years later the establishment of *Poetry* in Chicago gave an organ to the poets who were separating from the old tradition. By introducing the imagists and such other independents as Carl Sandburg and D. H. Lawrence and Vachel Lindsay, by presenting foreign poets like Rabindranath Tagore and Charles Vildrac, besides many in translation, and by encouraging an experimental spirit and certain new austerities of technique, the magazine exerted a definite influence.

To trace the origin and development of the new movement before 1900 was indeed a temptation; but the quest would have led too far, would have made the book not only unwieldy, but theoretic and controversial. It has seemed best to adhere to the limitations imposed in the introduction to the first edition, except that Mr. Yeats,

whose later work should be represented in any twentieth-century anthology, now consents to the use of a group of his poems.

The second temptation which we have resisted urged us to include translations; especially some of the translations from the Chinese which scholar-poets like Arthur Waley, Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell and Witter Bynner, usually with the aid of collaborators, have published during the past five years—translations which have had an important and far-reaching influence toward simplicity, directness, condensation, and other virtues now much prized. The inclusion of two Pound-Fenellosa paraphrases from Li Po in the first edition seemed to constitute a precedent which the editors were much inclined to follow.

But again they would have been led too far. Since 1917 the search in China's treasury of poetry has brought forth numerous volumes of absorbing interest. But, after all, these Chinese poets lived long ago; and if their recent presentation and quaint modernness of spirit entitle them to a place in a twentieth-century anthology, why should not Persia and India be searched as well, and ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Europe—all the fifteen or more literatures represented in *Poetry* by recent translations? Versions from the Greek by H. D. and Richard Aldington and F. S. Flint, from the Provençal by Ezra Pound, from the modern French by a number of poets, from the Russian and other Slavic tongues by Deutsch-Yarmolinsky and P. Selver, from the American aboriginal by Frank Gordon, Mary Austin, Natalie Curtis Burlin and others—all these, as well as the Chinese, have had an incalculable influence in breaking down provincial barriers which had tended to confine English poets within too narrow bounds of artistic technique and motive. They have assisted greatly in the broadening process now so manifest in the art, in making poetry in the English language more cosmopolitan and more representative of the age.

Thus the very number and excellence of important and suggestive translations have made it impossible to include them. The editors were compelled to decide that if the volume was to represent adequately the best work of twentieth-century poets of the English-speaking nations, it would be necessary to confine its new inclusions strictly to this field.

One other detail of editorial policy, or taste, should perhaps be touched upon.

In reading the poetry of the past ten years, we have become conscious of increasing divergences between the English product and that of the United States. This is, no doubt, inevitable and desirable; and it may be both inevitable and desirable—at least it is natural—that an anthology prepared in this country should follow with the greater sympathy the American path in this divergence.

But certain conclusions have been forced upon the editors for which they were not quite prepared. The first is the wide range and variety of modern American poetry. At last it begins to be continental in scope; to express the immense differences of climate, landscape, and racial and cultural environment, in this majestically vast and bewilderingly mixed nation. Compared with this variety and spaciousness, so to speak, much of the recent English poetry seems cribbed, cabined and confined in scope and range, and monotonous in feeling and style. Whole groups of poets in the mother country are occupied with English rural life—not wild nature, but nature possessed and civilized: a pleasing subject, but so long and competently handled for two hundred years as to become easily tiresome to an outsider unless presented with such rare freshness as only two or three of these pastoral poets attain.

A young English poet said in a recent letter:

"It is a question of race-vitality. Most American writers have a sense of life which cannot but impress any impartial English reader. I don't mean any shouting or screaming about modern wonders or modern beauty, I mean an inner force to the poem which is not found in English verse."

As American poetry ceases to be colonial, much British poetry seems, by comparison, provincial. The point was stated precisely, not long ago, by Mrs. Padraic Colum, in her review of a certain English novel in *The Freeman:*

"If books like this make all American books seem crude, even the crudest American book makes this seem insular; for despite the paucity of emotion, something of the bigness of this vast continent, with its immense spaces and its conglomeration of races, is in all recent American writings. The bigness, perhaps, crushes and dwarfs the people; but it is something which, when it becomes articulate in literature, will make American writing so different from English that one can hardly feel there is much the American

can learn from English writing except its old aristocratic discipline."

The divergence of background and feeling will mean, of course, increasing divergence of critical attitude. In 1921 Mr. J. C. Squire, editor of the London *Mercury* and a well-known Georgian poet, asserted the general English attitude by including not a single American poet among the forty-six British in his anthology *Selections from Modern Poets*. The present editors, wondering at this insular exclusiveness, and at many of the book's inclusions as well, become aware that they represent a different world. Their world, unlike Mr. Squire's, contains numerous poets of the other nation. If the proportion of these is smaller than certain critics may demand, we can only reply that it presents justly our opinion of the relative importance and significance of the two groups. Every editor feels, and must necessarily reveal, certain unconscious sympathies and predilections; it is better, then, to reveal them quite frankly, without extenuation or apology. There is increasing evidence that Americans are beginning to give a direct and independent rating to the art of their contemporary fellow-countrymen. In particular they begin to appreciate their poets' offering; to admit that, as M. Jean Catel said two years ago in the *Mercure de France:*

"Il est, je crois, évident que la poésie moderne d'Angleterre balbutie, ou—que les amis de Kipling me pardonnent—fait du 'jazz-band'. Il est, pour moi du moins, aussi évident que les Etats-Unis entrent résolument dans l'Assemblée des Muses avec une merveilleuse offrande de poésie."

Of course the final verdict is not yet in; indeed, cannot be delivered for many years. Meantime, we offer this collection to the public as a presentation of one phase of contemporary opinion.

H. M.

THE NEW POETRY

AN ANTHOLOGY

OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY VERSE IN ENGLISH

Conrad Aiken

HE IMAGINES THAT HIS PUPPET HAS A DARK DREAM AND HEARS VOICES

From Punch, the Immortal Liar

First Voice

Pave the sky with stars for Punch!
And snare in flowers a moon for him—
With white rose-trees and apple-trees,
And cherubim and seraphim!

Second Voice

Look! he comes! how tall he is!
A crown of fire is on his head;
The sky unrolls before his feet,
Green mountains fear his tread.

The meteors now like dolphins dive
Into the white wave of the sky;
Blue moons and stars around him sing,
And suns triumphant cry!

Third Voice

Build a house of gold for Punch,
Of gold without and silk within;
With floors of glass—and let there be
For ever there a silver din

Of music's many instruments
In slow and low amazement heard:
In every window-niche a cage,
In every cage a singing bird.

Build it in a kingdom far:
In a forest green and deep;
Where no tears nor sorrows are,
But only song and sleep.

There to the noise of wind in trees
And many rivers winding down,
Let him forget the cares of earth
And nod a kingly crown!

Fourth Voice

Like a tower of brass is Punch,
And great and stately is his pace;
There is no other as tall as he—
None with so fair a face.

Fall down, fall down, you kings of men—
Fall down before him! This is he
For whom the moon pursues her ghost
And demons bend the knee.

Woe unto you, you miscreants
Who dare the lightnings of his eyes!
His hand, how strong! His wrath, how just!
His brow, how white and wise!

Fifth Voice

Solomon, clown, put by your crown;
And Judas, break your tree:
Seal up your tomb and burn your cross,
Jesus of Galilee!

For here walks one who makes you seem
But atoms that creep in grass:
You are the pageant of his dream,
And he will bid you pass.

Let Rome go over the earth in gold
With trumpets harshly blown!
For here comes one whose splendor burns
More gloriously, alone.

Heliogabalus, laugh your last!
Queen Sappho, lie you down!

Punch the immortal shakes the seas
And takes the sun for crown.

Sixth Voice

Sheba, now let down your hair
And play upon it with your hands,
While girls from Tal and Mozambique
Parade before in sarabands.

Play him songs inaudible
With white hands braceleted and slim,
Or shake your hair and let it fall
And softly darken him.

Cling to him, while cymbals far
Are sweetly smitten in the dusk,
And mænads, under a haughty star,
Break the white rose for its musk:

Cling to him, with your lips
Feed his heart on crumbs of fire
That shall, perpetually, delight,
But never slay desire!

Seventh Voice

Open a window on the world
With all its sorrow, and then
When he has heard that sound a space,
Close it fast again. . . .

Sweet will it be, lapped round with ease
And music-troubled air,
To hear for a moment on the wind
A sound of far despair;

And then to turn to lights again,
And fingers soft on strings,
While Sheba slips her bracelets off
And spreads her arms and sings. . . .

Sweet will it be, to hear far off
That gusty sound of pain,
And to remember, far away,
A world of death and rain;

And then, to close the window fast,
And laugh, and clap soft hands,
While girls from Tal and Mozambique
Parade in sarabands. . . .

Close now the window! Close it well! . . .
That slow lament of pain
Was but the dissonance that makes
Dull music sweet again.

Eighth Voice

Death, you will wear a chain of gold,
And wreaths of roses white and red;
And night-long will you dance for him
With garlands on your head.

Bring a cup and pour him wine,
And dance for him; for this is he
Who plays a jocund tune for you
But will not set you free.

Or go with thongs to scourge the world
And lay it waste; and then come back
To sorrow before him in a cage
And garb yourself in black.

A cage of gold he keeps for you! . . .
There he will watch you dance,
And fill his cup, immortally,
And laugh at circumstance.

Ninth Voice

There is a fountain in a wood
Where wavering lies a moon:

It plays to the slowly falling leaves
A sleepy tune.

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
Of gold and ivory;
The peacock spreads his tail, the leaves
Fall silently. . . .

There, amid silken sounds and wine
And music idly broken,
The drowsy god observes his world
With no word spoken.

Arcturus, rise! Orion, fall! . . .
The white-winged stars obey . . .
Or else he greets his Fellow-God;
And there, in the dusk, they play

A game of chess with stars for pawns
And a silver moon for queen:
Immeasurable as clouds above
A chess-board world they lean,

And thrust their hands amid their beards,
And utter words profound
That shake the star-swung firmament
With a fateful sound! . . .

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
Of gold and ivory;
The peacock spreads his tail; the leaves
Fall silently. . . .

PORTRAIT OF ONE DEAD

This is the house. On one side there is darkness,
On one side there is light.
Into the darkness you may lift your lanterns—
Oh, any number—it will still be night.
And here are echoing stairs to lead you downward
To long sonorous halls.
And here is spring forever at these windows,
With roses on the walls.

This is her room. On one side there is music—
On one side not a sound.
At one step she could move from love to silence,
Feel myriad darkness coiling round.
And here are balconies from which she heard you,
Your steady footsteps on the stair.
And here the glass in which she saw your shadow
As she unbound her hair.

Here is the room—with ghostly walls dissolving—
The twilight room in which she called you "lover";
And the floorless room in which she called you "friend".
So many times, in doubt, she ran between them!—
Through windy corridors of darkening end.

Here she could stand with one dim light above her,
And hear far music, like a sea in caverns,
Murmur away at hollowed walls of stone.
And here, in a roofless room where it was raining,
She bore the patient sorrow of rain alone.

Your words were walls which suddenly froze around her.
Your words were windows—large enough for moonlight,
Too small to let her through.
Your letters—fragrant cloisters faint with music.
The music that assuaged her there was you.

How many times she heard your step ascending,
Yet never saw your face!

She heard them turn again, ring slowly fainter,
Till silence swept the place.
Why had you gone? . . . The door, perhaps, mistaken . . .
You would go elsewhere. The deep walls were shaken.

A certain rose-leaf, sent without intention,
Became, with time, a woven web of fire—
She wore it, and was warm.
A certain hurried glance, let fall at parting,
Became, with time, the flashings of a storm.

Yet there was nothing asked, no hint to tell you
Of secret idols carved in secret chambers
From all you did and said.
Nothing was done, until at last she knew you.
Nothing was known, till, somehow, she was dead.

How did she die? You say she died of poison.
Simple and swift. And much to be regretted.
You did not see her pass
So many thousand times from light to darkness,
Pausing so many times before her glass.

You did not see how many times she hurried
To lean from certain windows, vainly hoping,
Passionate still for beauty, remembered spring.
You did not know how long she clung to music,
You did not hear her sing.

Did she, then, make the choice, and step out bravely
From sound to silence—close, herself, those windows?
Or was it true, instead,
That darkness moved—for once—and so possessed her? . . .
We'll never know, you say, for she is dead.

Zoë Akins

THE TRAGEDIENNE

A storm is riding on the tide;
Grey is the day and grey the tide,
Far-off the sea-gulls wheel and cry—
A storm draws near upon the tide.

A city lifts its minarets
To winds that from the desert sweep;
And prisoned Arab women weep
Below the domes and minarets.

Upon a hill in Thessaly
Stand broken columns in a line
About a cold forgotten shrine,
Beneath a moon in Thessaly.
But in the world there is no place
So desolate as your tragic face.

I AM THE WIND

I am the wind that wavers,
  You are the certain land;
I am the shadow that passes
  Over the sand.

I am the leaf that quivers,
  You the unshaken tree;
You are the stars that are steadfast,
  I am the sea.

You are the light eternal—
  Like a torch I shall die.
You are the surge of deep music,
  I but a cry!

CONQUERED

O pale! O vivid! dear!
  O disillusioned eyes
Forever near!
  O dream, arise!

I will not turn away
  From the face I loved again.
Your beauty may sway
  My life with pain.

I will drink the wine you pour,
  I will seek to put asunder
Our ways no more—
  O love! O wonder!

THE WANDERER

The ships are lying in the bay,
  The gulls are swinging round their spars;
My soul as eagerly as they
  Desires the margin of the stars.

So much do I love wandering,
  So much I love the sea and sky,
That it will be a piteous thing
  In one small grave to lie.

Richard Aldington

THE POPLAR

Why do you always stand there shivering
Between the white stream and the road?

The people pass through the dust
On bicycles, in carts, in motor-cars;

The wagoners go by at dawn;
The lovers walk on the grass path at night.

Stir from your roots—walk, poplar!
You are more beautiful than they are.

I know that the white wind loves you,
Is always kissing you and turning up
The white lining of your green petticoat.
The sky darts through you like blue rain,
And the grey rain drips on your flanks
And loves you.
And I have seen the moon
Slip his silver penny into your pocket
As you straightened your hair;
And the white mist curling and hesitating
Like a bashful lover about your knees.

I know you, poplar;
I have watched you since I was ten.
But if you had a little real love,
A little strength,
You would leave your nonchalant idle lovers
And go walking down the white road
Behind the wagoners.

There are beautiful beeches
Down beyond the hill.
Will you always stand there shivering?

LESBIA

Grow weary if you will, let me be sad.
Use no more speech now;
Let the silence spread gold hair above us,
Fold on delicate fold.
Use no more speech—
You had the ivory of my life to carve. . . .

And Picus of Mirandola is dead;
And all the gods they dreamed and fabled of,
Hermes, and Thoth and Bêl are rotten now,
Rotten and dank.

And through it all I see your pale Greek face;
Tenderness
Makes me eager as a little child to love you,
You morsel left half-cold on Cæsar's plate.

IMAGES

I

Like a gondola of green scented fruits
Drifting along the dank canals at Venice,
You, O exquisite one,
Have entered into my desolate city.

II

The blue smoke leaps
Like swirling clouds of birds vanishing.
So my love leaps forth toward you,
Vanishes and is renewed.

III

A rose-yellow moon in a pale sky
When the sunset is faint vermilion
In the mist among the tree-boughs,
Art thou to me, my beloved.

IV

A young beech-tree on the edge of a forest
Stands still in the evening,
Yet shudders through all its leaves in the light air
And seems to fear the stars:
So are you still, and so tremble.

V

The red deer are high on the mountain,
They are beyond the last pine-trees.
And my desires have run with them.

VI

The flower which the wind has shaken
Is soon filled again with rain;
So does my heart fill slowly with tears,
O Foam-driver, Wind-of-the-vineyards,
Until you return.

CHORICOS

The ancient songs
Pass deathward mournfully.

Cold lips that sing no more, and withered wreaths,
Regretful eyes, and drooping breasts and wings—
Symbols of ancient songs
Mournfully passing
Down to the great white surges,
Watched of none
Save the frail sea-birds
And the lithe pale girls,
Daughters of Okeanos.

And the songs pass
From the green land
Which lies upon the waves as a leaf
On the flowers of hyacinth;
And they pass from the waters,
The manifold winds and the dim moon.
And they come,
Silently winging through soft Kimmerian dusk,
To the quiet level lands
That she keeps for us all,

That she wrought for us all for sleep
In the silver days of the earth's dawning—
Proserpina, daughter of Zeus.

And we turn from the Kyprian's breasts,
And we turn from thee,
Phoibos Apollon,
And we turn from the music of old
And the hills that we loved and the meads,
And we turn from the fiery day,
And the lips that were over-sweet;
For silently
Brushing the fields with red-shod feet,
With purple robe
Searing the grass as with a sudden flame,
Death,
Thou hast come upon us.

And of all the ancient songs
Passing to the swallow-blue halls
By the dark streams of Persephone,
This only remains:
That in the end we turn to thee,
Death,
We turn to thee, singing
One last song.

O Death,
Thou art an healing wind
That blowest over white flowers
A-tremble with dew.
Thou art a wind flowing
Over far leagues of lonely sea.
Thou art the dusk and the fragrance;
Thou art the lips of love mournfully smiling;
Thou art the sad peace of one
Satiate with old desires.
Thou art the silence of beauty;
And we look no more for the morning,

We yearn no more for the sun,
Since with thy white hands,
Death,
Thou crownest us with the pallid chaplets,
The slim colorless poppies
Which in thy garden alone
Softly thou gatherest.

And silently,
And with slow feet approaching,
And with bowed head and unlit eyes,
We kneel before thee.
And thou, leaning toward us,
Caressingly layest upon us
Flowers from thy thin cold hands;
And, smiling as a chaste woman
Knowing love in her heart,
Thou sealest our eyes,
And the illimitable quietude
Comes gently upon us.

Mary Aldis

BARBERRIES

You say I touch the barberries
As a lover his mistress?
What a curious fancy!
One must be delicate, you know—
They have bitter thorns.
You say my hand is hurt?
Oh no, it was my breast—
It was crushed and pressed.
I mean—why yes, of course, of course—
There is a bright drop—isn't there?—
Right on my finger;
Just the color of a barberry,
But it comes from my heart.

Do you love barberries?—
In the autumn
When the sun's desire
Touches them to a glory of crimson and gold?
I love them best then.
There is something splendid about them:
They are not afraid
Of being warm and glad and bold;
They flush joyously,
Like a cheek under a lover's kiss;
They bleed cruelly
Like a dagger-wound in the breast;
They flame up madly for their little hour,
Knowing they must die.
Do you love barberries?

WHEN YOU COME

"There was a girl with him for a time. She took him to her room when he was desolate and warmed him and took care of him. One day he could not find her. For many weeks he walked constantly in that locality in search of her."—From *Life of Francis Thompson.*

When you come tonight
To our small room
You will look and listen—
I shall not be there.

You will cry out your dismay
To the unheeding gods;
You will wait and look and listen—
I shall not be there.

There is a part of you I love
More than your hands in mine at rest;
There is a part of you I love
More than your lips upon my breast.

There is a part of you I wound
Even in my caress;
There is a part of you withheld
I may not possess.

There is a part of you I hate—
Your need of me
When you would be alone,
Alone and free.

When you come tonight
To our small room
You will look and listen—
I shall not be there.

FLASH-LIGHTS

I

Candles toppling sideways in tomato-cans
Sputter and sizzle at head and foot.
The gaudy patterns of a patch-work quilt
Lie smooth and straight
Save where upswelling over a silent shape.
A man in high boots stirs something on a rusty stove
Round and round and round,
As a new cry like a bleating lamb's
Pierces his brain.
After a time the man busies himself
With hammer and nails and rough-hewn lumber,
But fears to strike a blow.
Outside the moonlight sleeps white upon the plain
And the bark of a coyote shrills across the night.

II

A smell of musk
Comes to him pungently through the darkness.
On the screen
Scenes from foreign lands,

Released by the censor,
Shimmer in cool black and white
Historic information.
He shifts his seat sideways, sideways—
A seeking hand creeps to another hand,
And a leaping flame
Illuminates the historic information.

III

Within the room, sounds of weeping
Low and hushed:
Without, a man, beautiful with the beauty
Of young strength,
Holds pitifully to the handle of the door.
He hiccoughs and turns away,
While a hand-organ plays,
"The hours I spend with thee, dear heart."

Sherwood Anderson

SONG OF INDUSTRIAL AMERICA

They tell themselves so many little lies, my beloved. Now wait, little one—we can't sing. We are standing in a crowd, by a bridge, in the West. Hear the voices. Turn around. Let's go home—I am tired. They tell themselves so many little lies.

You remember, in the night we arose. We were young. There was smoke in the passage and you laughed. Was it good—that black smoke? Look away—to the streams and the lake. We're alive. See my hand, how it trembles on the rail.

Here is song, here in America, here now, in our time. Now wait. I'll go to the train—I'll not swing off into tunes. I'm all right—I just want to talk.

You watch my hand on the rail of this bridge. I press down. The blood goes down, there. That steadies me; it makes me all right.

Now here is how it's going to come—the song, I mean. I've watched things, men and faces. I know.

First there are the broken things, myself and the others. I don't mind that—I'm gone, shot to pieces. I'm part of the scheme—I'm the broken end of a song myself. We are all that, here in the West, here in Chicago. Tongues clatter against teeth. There's nothing but shrill screams and a rattle. That had to be—it's a part of the scheme.

Souls, dry souls, rattle around.
Winter of song. Winter of song.

Now, faint little voices do lift up. They are swept away in the void—that's true enough. It had to be so from the very first.

Pshaw, I'm steady enough—let me alone. Keokuk, Tennessee, Michigan, Chicago, Kalamazoo—don't the names in this country make you fairly drunk? We'll stand by this brown stream for hours. I'll not be swept away—watch my hand, how steady it is. To catch this song and sing it would do much, make much clear.

Come close to me, warm little thing. It is night—I am cold. When I was a boy in my village here in the West, I always knew all the old men. How sweet they were—quite biblical too—makers of wagons and harness and plows, sailors and soldiers and pioneers. We got Walt and Abraham out of that lot.

Then a change came.

Drifting along. Drifting along.
Winter of song. Winter of song.

You know my city, Chicago triumphant—factories and marts and the roar of machines—horrible, terrible, ugly and brutal.

It crushed things down and down. Nobody wanted to hurt. They didn't want to hurt me or you. They were caught themselves. I know the old men here—millionaires. I've always known old men all my life. I'm old myself. You would never guess how old I am.

Can a singer arise and sing in this smoke and grime? Can he keep his throat clear? Can his courage survive?

I'll tell you what it is—now you be still. To hell with you. I'm an old empty barrel floating in the stream—that's what I am. You stand away—I've come to life. My arms lift up—I begin to swim.

Hell and damnation—turn me loose! The floods come on. That isn't the roar of the trains at all. It's the flood—the terrible, horrible flood turned loose.

Winter of song. Winter of song.
Carried along. Carried along.

Now, in the midst of the broken waters of my civilization, rhythm begins. Clear above the flood I raise my ringing voice. In the disorder and darkness of the night, in the wind and the washing waves, I shout to my brothers—lost in the flood.

Little faint beginnings of things—old things dead, sweet old things—a life lived in Chicago, in the West, in the whirl of industrial America.

God knows you might have become something else—just like me. You might have made soft little tunes, written cynical little ditties, eh? Why the devil didn't you make some money and own an automobile?

Do you believe? Now listen—I do. Say, you—now listen! Do you believe the hand of God reached down to me in the flood? I do. 'Twas like a streak of fire along my back. That's a lie, of course. The face of God looked down at me, over the rim of the world.

Don't you see we are all a part of something, here in the West? We're trying to break through. I'm a song myself, the broken end of a song myself.

We have to sing, you see, here in the darkness. All men have to sing—poor broken things. We have to sing here in the darkness in the roaring flood. We have to find each other. Have you courage tonight for a song? Lift your voices. Come.

CHICAGO

I am mature, a man child, in America, in the West, in the great valley of the Mississippi. My head arises above the cornfields. I stand up among the new corn.

I am a child, a confused child in a confused world. There are no clothes made that fit me. The minds of men cannot clothe me. Great projects arise within me. I have a brain, and it is cunning and shrewd.

I want leisure to become beautiful, but there is no leisure. Men should bathe me with prayers and with weeping, but there are no men.

Now—from now—from today I shall do deeds of fiery meaning. Songs shall arise in my throat and hurt me.

I am a little thing, a tiny little thing on the vast prairies. I know nothing. My mouth is dirty. I cannot tell what I want. My feet are sunk in the black swampy land, but I am a lover. I love life. In the end love shall save me.

The days are long—it rains—it snows. I am an old man. I am sweeping the ground where my grave shall be.

Look upon me, my beloved, my lover who does not come. I am raw and bleeding, a new thing in a new world. I run swiftly o'er bare fields. Listen—there is the sound of the tramping of many feet. Life is dying in me. I am old and palsied. I am just at the beginning of my life.

Do you not see that I am old, O my beloved? Do you not understand that I cannot sing, that my songs choke me? Do you not see that I am so young I cannot find the word in the confusion of words?

EVENING SONG

Back of Chicago the open fields—were you ever there?
Trains coming toward you out of the West—
Streaks of light on the long grey plains? Many a song—
Aching to sing.

I've got a grey and ragged brother in my breast—
That's a fact.

Back of Chicago the open fields—were you ever there?
Trains going from you into the West—
Clouds of dust on the long grey plains.
Long trains go West, too—in the silence.
Always the song—
Waiting to sing.

AMERICAN SPRING SONG

In the spring, when winds blew and farmers were plowing fields,
It came into my mind to be glad because of my brutality.

Along a street I went and over a bridge.
I went through many streets in my city and over many bridges.
Men and women I struck with my fists, and my hands began to bleed.

Under a bridge I crawled, and stood trembling with joy
At the river's edge.
Because it was spring and soft sunlight came through the cracks of the bridge,
I tried to understand myself.

Out of the mud at the river's edge I molded myself a god—
A grotesque little god with a twisted face,
A god for myself and my men.

You see now, brother, how it was.

I was a man with clothes made by a Jewish tailor;
Cunningly wrought clothes, made for a nameless one.
I wore a white collar and someone had given me a jeweled pin
To wear at my throat.
That amused and hurt me too.

No one knew that I knelt in the mud beneath the bridge
In the city of Chicago.

You see I am whispering my secret to you.

I want you to believe in my insanity and to understand that I love
God—
That's what I want.

And then, you see, it was spring,
And soft sunlight came through the cracks of the bridge.
I had been long alone in a strange place where no gods came.

Creep, men, and kiss the twisted face of my mud god.
I'll not hit you with my bleeding fists—
I'm a twisted God myself.

It is spring and love has come to me.
Love has come to me and to my men.

A VISIT

Westward the field of the cloth of gold.
It is fall—see the gold in the dust of the fields.
Lay the golden cloth upon me. It is night and I come through
the streets to your window.
The dust and the words are all gone, brushed away. Let me sleep.

Walter Conrad Arensberg

VOYAGE À L'INFINI

The swan existing
Is like a song with an accompaniment
Imaginary.

Across the glassy lake,
Across the lake to the shadow of the willows,
It is accompanied by an image—
As by Debussy's
"*Reflets dans l'eau.*"

The swan that is
Reflects
Upon the solitary water—breast to breast
With the duplicity:
"*The other one!*"

And breast to breast it is confused.
O visionary wedding! O stateliness of the procession!
It is accompanied by the image of itself
Alone.

At night
The lake is a wide silence,
Without imagination.

AT DAYBREAK

I had a dream and I awoke with it—
Poor little thing that I had not unclasped
After the kiss good-by.

And at the surface how it gasped—
This thing that I had loved in the unlit

Depth of the drowsy sea. . . .
Ah me!—
This thing with which I drifted toward the sky.

Driftwood upon a wave—
Senseless the motion that it gave.

TO HASEKAWA

Perhaps it is no matter that you died.
Life's an *incognito* which you saw through:
You never told on life—you had your pride;
But life has told on you.

DIALOGUE

Be patient, Life, when Love is at the gate,
And when he enters let him be at home.
Think of the roads that he has had to roam.
Think of the years that he has had to wait.

But if I let Love in I shall be late.
Another has come first—there is no room.
And I am thoughtful of the endless loom—
Let Love be patient, the importunate.

O Life, be idle and let Love come in,
And give thy dreamy hair that Love may spin.

But Love himself is idle with his song.
Let Love come last, and then may Love last long.

Be patient, Life, for Love is not the last.
Be patient now with Death, for Love has passed.

SONG OF THE SOULS SET FREE

Wrap the earth in cloudy weather
For a shroud.
We have slipped the earthly tether,
We're above the cloud.
Peep and draw the cloud together,
Peep upon the bowed.

What can they be bowing under,
Wild and wan?
Peep, and draw the cloud asunder,
Peep, and wave a dawn.
It will make them rise and wonder
Whether we are gone.

Mary Austin

THE EAGLE'S SONG

Said the Eagle:
When my time came
I was astonished
To find that there was death;
I felt cold sinking within me.

Alas, my home—
Shall I leave it?
All-beholding mountains,
From your snowy stations
Shall I see my house no more?

North I went,
Leaning on the wind:
Through the forest resounded
The cry of the wounded doe.

East I went,
Seeking
Where the white-hot dawn
Treads on the trail of morning blueness:
The wind brought me
The smell of death in my nostrils.

South I went,
Looking
For the place where there is no death:
I heard singing,
The sound of wailing for the dead.

West I went,
On the world-encompassing water:
Death's trail was before me.

People, O people,
It must be that we shall leave this pleasant earth.
Therefore let us make songs together,
Let us make a twine of songs.
With them we shall bind the Spirit
Fast to the middle heaven—
There at least it shall roam no more.
The white way of souls—
There at least it shall roam no more.
The white way of souls,
There shall be our home.

Wilton Agnew Barrett

A NEW ENGLAND CHURCH

The white church on the hill
  Looks over the little bay—
A beautiful thing on the hill
  When the mist is gray;

When the hill looks old, and the air turns cold
With the dying day!

The white church on the hill—
A Greek in a Puritan town—
Was built on the brow of the hill
For John Wesley's God's renown,
And a conscience old set a steeple cold
On its Grecian crown.

In a storm of faith on the hill
Hands raised it over the bay.
When the night is clear on the hill,
It stands up strong and gray;
But its door is old, and the tower points cold
To the Milky Way.

The white church on the hill
Looks lonely over the town.
Dim to them under the hill
Is its God's renown,
And its Bible old, and its creed grown cold,
And the letters brown.

Joseph Warren Beach

RUE BONAPARTE

You that but seek your modest rolls and coffee,
When you have passed the bar, and have saluted
Its watchful madam, then pray enter softly
The inner chamber, even as one who treads
The haunts of mating birds, and watch discreetly
Over your paper's edge. There in the corner,
Obscure, ensconced behind the uncovered table,
A man and woman keep their silent tryst.
Outside the morning floods the pavement sweetly;

Yonder aloft a maid throws back the shutters;
The hucksters utter modulated cries
As wistful as some old pathetic ballad.
Within, the brooding lovers, unaware,
Sit quiet hand in hand, or in low whispers
Communicate a more articulate love.
Sometimes she plays with strings and, gently leaning
Against his shoulder, shows him childish tricks.
She has not touched the glass of milk before her,
Her breakfast and the price of their admittance.
She has a look devoted and confiding
And might be pretty were not life so hard.
But he, gaunt as his rusty bicycle
That stands against the table, and with features
So drawn and stark, has only futile strength.
The love they cherish in this stolen meeting
Through all the day that follows makes her sweeter,
And him perhaps it only leaves more bitter.
But you that have not love at all, old men
That warm your fingers by this fire, discreetly
Play out your morning game of dominoes.

THE VIEW AT GUNDERSON'S

Sitting in his rocker waiting for your tea,
Gazing from his window, this is what you see:

A cat that snaps at flies; a track leading down
By log-built shanties gray and brown;

The corner of a barn, and tangled lines of fence
Of rough-hewn pickets standing dense;

The ghost of a tree on a dull wet day;
And the blanket fog where lies the bay.

But when he's seen the last of you,
Sitting in his rocker, what's *his* view?

(For there he sits, day in, day out,
Nursing his leg—and his dreams, no doubt.)

The snow-slide up behind the *gaard;*
The farm beside old Trondjem *fjord;*

Daughters seven with their cold blue eyes,
And the great pine where his father lies;

The boat that brought him over the sea;
And the toothless woman who makes his tea.

(Their picture, framed on the rough log wall,
Proves she had teeth when he was tall.)

He sees the balsam thick on the hill,
And all he's cleared with a stubborn will.

And last he sees the full-grown son
For whom he hoards what he has won.

You saw little worth the strife:
What he sees is one man's life.

William Rose Benét

THE FALCONER OF GOD

I flung my soul to the air like a falcon flying.
I said: "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings,
Rising and crying
Wordless, wondrous things;
The secret of the stars, of the world's heart-strings
The answer to their woe.
Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so!"

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
I heard the mournful loon
In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then, with feathery thunder, the bird of my desire
Broke from the cover
Flashing silver fire.
High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stooped upon him, and gripped and held him fast.

My soul dropped through the air—with heavenly plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?
Nay! but a piteous freight,
A dark and heavy weight
Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever stilled—
All of the wonder
Gone that ever filled
Its guise with glory. O bird that I have killed,
How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed of you!

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges!
I beat forever
The fens and the sedges.
The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous pledges,
All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall find!

THE HORSE THIEF

There he moved, cropping the grass at the purple canyon's lip.
His mane was mixed with the moonlight that silvered his snow-white side,

For the moon sailed out of a cloud with the wake of a spectral ship.
I crouched and I crawled on my belly, my lariat coil looped wide.

Dimly and dark the mesas broke on the starry sky.
A pall covered every color of their gorgeous glory at noon.
I smelt the yucca and mesquite, and stifled my heart's quick cry,
And wormed and crawled on my belly to where he moved against the moon!

Some Moorish barb was that mustang's sire. His lines were beyond all wonder.
From the prick of his ears to the flow of his tail he ached in my throat and eyes.
Steel and velvet grace! As the prophet says, God had "clothed his neck with thunder."
Oh, marvelous with the drifting cloud he drifted across the skies!

And then I was near at hand—crouched, and balanced, and cast the coil;
And the moon was smothered in cloud, and the rope through my hands with a rip!
But somehow I gripped and clung, with the blood in my brain aboil—
With a turn round the rugged tree-stump there on the purple canyon's lip.

Right into the stars he reared aloft, his red eye rolling and raging.
He whirled and sunfished and lashed, and rocked the earth to thunder and flame.
He squealed like a regular devil horse. I was haggard and spent and aging—
Roped clean, but almost storming clear, his fury too fierce to tame.

And I cursed myself for a tenderfoot moon-dazzled to play the part;
But I was doubly desperate then, with the posse pulled out from town,
Or I'd never have tried it. I only knew I must get a mount and a start.
The filly had snapped her foreleg short— I had had to shoot her down.

So there he struggled and strangled, and I snubbed him around
the tree.
Nearer, a little nearer—hoofs planted, and lolling tongue—
Till a sudden slack pitched me backward. He reared right on top
of me.
Mother of God—that moment! He missed me . . . and up I
swung.

Somehow, gone daft completely and clawing a bunch of his mane,
As he stumbled and tripped in the lariat, there I was—up and astride
And cursing for seven counties! And the mustang? *Just insane!*
Crack-bang! went the rope; we cannoned off the tree; then—gods,
that ride!

A rocket—that's all, a rocket! I dug with my teeth and nails.
Why, we never hit even the high spots (though I hardly remember
things);
But I heard a monstrous booming like a thunder of flapping sails
When he spread—well, *call* me a liar!—when he spread those wings,
those wings!

So white that my eyes were blinded; thick-feathered and wide
unfurled,
They beat the air into billows. We sailed, and the earth was gone.
Canyon and desert and mesa withered below, with the world.
And then I knew that mustang; for I—was Bellerophon!

Yes, glad as the Greek, and mounted on a horse of the elder gods,
With never a magic bridle or a fountain-mirror nigh!
My chaps and spurs and holster must have looked it? What's the
odds?
I'd a leg over lightning and thunder, careering across the sky!

And forever streaming before me, fanning my forehead cool,
Flowed a mane of molten silver; and just before my thighs
(As I gripped his velvet-muscled ribs, while I cursed myself for a
fool),
The steady pulse of those pinions—their wonderful fall and rise!

The bandanna I bought in Bowie blew loose and whipped from
my neck.
My shirt was stuck to my shoulders and ribboning out behind.
The stars were dancing, wheeling and glancing, dipping with smirk
and beck.
The clouds were flowing, dusking and glowing. We rode a roaring
wind.

We soared through the silver starlight to knock at the planets' gates.
New shimmering constellations came whirling into our ken.
Red stars and green and golden swung out of the void that waits
For man's great last adventure; the Signs took shape—and then

I knew the lines of that Centaur the moment I saw him come!
The musical-box of the heavens all around us rolled to a tune
That tinkled and chimed and trilled with silver sounds that struck
you dumb,
As if some archangel were grinding out the music of the moon.

Melody-drunk on the Milky Way, as we swept and soared hilarious,
Full in our pathway, sudden he stood—the Centaur of the Stars,
Flashing from head and hoofs and breast! I knew him for Sagit-
tarius.
He reared, and bent and drew his bow. He crouched as a boxer
spars.

Flung back on his haunches, weird he loomed; then leapt—and
the dim void lightened.
Old White Wings shied and swerved aside, and fled from the
splendor-shod.
Through a flashing welter of worlds we charged. I knew why
my horse was frightened.
He *had* two faces—a dog's and a man's—that Babylonian god!

Also, he followed us real as fear. Ping! went an arrow past.
My broncho buck-jumped, humping high. We plunged . . . I
guess that's all!
I lay on the purple canyon's lip, when I opened my eyes at last—
Stiff and sore and my head like a drum, but I broke no bones in
the fall.

So you know—and now you may string me up. Such was the way you caught me.
Thank you for letting me tell it straight, though you never could greatly care.
For I took a horse that wasn't mine! . . . But there's one the heavens brought me,
And I'll hang right happy because I know he is waiting for me up there.

From creamy muzzle to cannon-bone, by God, he's a peerless wonder!
He is steel and velvet and furnace-fire, and death's supremest prize;
And never again shall be roped on earth that neck that is "clothed with thunder" . . .
String me up, Dave! Go dig my grave! *I rode him across the skies!*

Maxwell Bodenheim

THE REAR-PORCHES OF AN APARTMENT-BUILDING

A sky that has never known sun, moon or stars,
A sky that is like a dead, kind face,
Would have the color of your eyes,
O servant-girl, singing of pear-trees in the sun,
And scraping the yellow fruit you once picked
When your lavender-white eyes were alive. . . .
On the porch above you are two women,
Whose faces have the color of brown earth that has never felt rain.
The still wet basins of ponds that have been drained
Are their eyes.
They knit gray rosettes and nibble cakes. . . .
And on the top porch are three children
Gravely kissing each others' foreheads—
And an ample nurse with a huge red fan. . . .

The passing of the afternoon to them
Is but the lengthening of blue-black shadows on brick walls.

THE INTERNE

Oh, the agony of having too much power!
In my passive palm are hundreds of lives.
Strange alchemy!—they drain my blood:
My heart becomes iron; my brain copper; my eyes silver; my lips brass.
Merely by twitching a supple finger, I twirl lives from me—strong-winged,
Or fluttering and broken.
They are my children, I am their mother and father.
I watch them live and die.

THE OLD JEW

No fawn-tinged hospital pajamas could cheat him of his austerity,
Which tamed even the doctors with its pure fire.
They examined him; made him bow to them:
Massive altars were they, at whose swollen feet grovelled a worshiper.
Then they laughed, half in scorn of him; and there came a miracle.
The little man was above them at a bound.
His austerity, like an irresistible sledge-hammer, drove them lower and lower:
They dwindled while he soared.

THE MINER

Those on the top say they know you, Earth—they are liars.
You are my father, and the silence I work in is my mother.
Only the son knows his father.
We are alike—sweaty, inarticulate of soul, bending under thick knowledge.
I drink and shout with my brothers when above you—
Like most children we soon forget the parents of our souls.
But you avidly grip us again—we pay for the little noise of life we steal.

TO AN ENEMY

I despise my friends more than you.
I would have known myself, but they stood before the mirrors
And painted on them images of the virtues I craved.
You came with sharpest chisel, scraping away the false paint.
Then I knew and detested myself, but not you:
For glimpses of you in the glasses you uncovered
Showed me the virtues whose images you destroyed.

TO A DISCARDED STEEL RAIL

Straight strength pitched into the surliness of the ditch,
A soul you have—strength has always delicate secret reasons.
Your soul is a dull question.
I do not care for your strength, but for your stiff smile at Time—
A smile which men call rust.

LOVE

You seemed a caryatid melting
Into the wind-blown, dark blue temple of the sky.
But you bent down as I came closer, breaking the image.
When I passed, you raised your head
And blew the little feather of a smile upon me.
I caught it on open lips and blew it back.
And in that moment we loved,
Although you stood still waiting for your lover,
And I walked on to my love.

SONGS TO A WOMAN

I

You are like startled song-wings against my heart
Which flutters like a harp-string wounded
By too much quivering music.

You cover me with a blue dream-robe
Whose silk ripples out like imaged water . . . .
And when, for a moment, you leave,
I am a black sky awaiting its moon.

II

If I could be moon-light scattered out
Over the blowing dark-blue hair
Of kneeling, flowing crystal breezes
Breathing a litany of pale odors;
If I could be moonlight scattered out
Over the whispers meeting in your heart,
The marriage of our souls would be
No more complete than now.

DEATH

I shall walk down the road.
I shall turn and feel upon my feet
The kisses of Death, like scented rain.
For Death is a black slave with little silver birds
Perched in a sleeping wreath upon his head.
He will tell me, his voice like jewels
Dropped into a satin bag,
How he has tip-toed after me down the road,
His heart made a dark whirlpool with longing for me.
Then he will graze me with his hands
And I shall be one of the sleeping silver birds
Between the cold waves of his hair, as he tip-toes on.

IMPULSIVE DIALOGUE

Poet. Will you, like other men,
Offer me indigo indignities?
Undertaker. Indigo indignities!
The words are like a mermaid and a saint
Doubting each other's existence with a kiss.

Poet. The words of most men kiss
With satiated familiarity.
Indigo is dark and vehement,
But one word in place of two
Angers barmaids and critics.
Undertaker. Straining after originality,
You argue with its ghost!
A simple beauty, like morning
Harnessed by a wide sparkle
And plodding into the hearts of men,
Cannot reach your frantic juggling.
Poet. I can appreciate
The spontaneous redundancy of nature
Without the aid of an echo
From men who lack her impersonal size.
Undertaker. The sweeping purchase of an evening
By an army of stars;
The bold incoherence of love;
The peaceful mountain-roads of friendship—
These things evade your dexterous epigrams!
Poet. A statue, polished and large,
Dominates when it stands alone.
Placed in a huge profusion of statues,
Its outlines become humiliated.
Simplicity demands one gesture
And men give it endless thousands.
Complexity wanders through a forest,
Glimpsing details in the gloom.
Undertaker. I do not crave the dainty pleasure
Of chasing ghosts in a forest!
Nor do I care to pluck
Exaggerated mushrooms in the gloom.
I have lost myself on roads
Crossed by tossing hosts of men.
Pain and anger have scorched our slow feet:
Peace has washed our foreheads.
Poet. Futility, massive and endless,
Captures a stumbling grandeur
Embalmed in history.

In my forest you could see this
From a distance, and lose
Your limited intolerance.
Simplicity and subtlety
At different times are backgrounds for each other,
Changing with the position of our eyes. . . .
Death will burn your eyes
With his taciturn complexity.

Undertaker. Death will strike your eyes
With his wild simplicity!

Poet. Words are soldiers of fortune
Hired by different ideas
To provide an importance for life.
But within the glens of silence
They meet in secret peace. . . .
Undertaker, do you make of death
A puffing wretch forever pursued
By duplicates of vanquished forms?
Or do you make him a sneering king
Brushing flies from his bloodless cheeks?
Do you see him as an unappeased brooding
Walking over the dust of men?
Do you make him an eager giant
Discovering and blending into his consciousness
The tiny parts of his limitless mind?

Undertaker. Death and I do not know each other.
I am the stolid janitor
Who cleans the litter he has left
And claims a fancied payment.

Poet. Come to my fantastic forest
And you will not need to rise
From simple labors, asking death
For final wages.

Gordon Bottomley

NIGHT AND MORNING SONGS

MY MOON

My moon was lit in an hour of lilies;
The apple-trees seemed older than ever.
It rose from matted trees that sever
The oats from the meadow, and woke the fillies
That reared in dew and gleamed with dew
And ran like water and shadow, and cried.
It moistened and veiled the oats yet new,
And seemed to drip long drops of the tide,
Of the mother-sea so lately left.
Feathers of flower were each bereft
Of color and stem, and floated low;
Another lily opened then
And lost a little gold-dust; but when
The lime-boughs lifted there seemed to go
Some life of the moon, like breath that moves
Or parting glances that flutter and strain—
A ghost with hands the color of doves
And feet the color of rain.

ELEGIAC MOOD

From song and dream for ever gone
Are Helen, Helen of Troy,
And Cleopatra made to look upon,
And many a daring boy—
Young Faust and Sigurd and Hippolytus:
They are twice dead and we must find
Great ladies yet unblemished by the mind,
Heroes and acts not cold for us
In amber or spirits of too many words.
Ay, these are murdered by much thinking on.
I hanker even for new shapes of swords,
More different sins, and raptures not yet done.

Yet, as I wait on marvels, such a bird
As maybe Sigurd heard—
A thrush—alighting with a little run
Out-tops the daisies as it passes
And peeps bright-eyed above the grasses.

DAWN

A thrush is tapping a stone
With a snail-shell in its beak;
A small bird hangs from a cherry
Until the stem shall break.
No waking song has begun,
And yet birds chatter and hurry
And throng in the elm's gloom
Because an owl goes home.

Rupert Brooke

RETROSPECT

In your arms was still delight,
Quiet as a street at night;
And thoughts of you, I do remember,
Were green leaves in a darkened chamber,
Were dark clouds in a moonless sky.
Love, in you, went passing by,
Penetrative, remote, and rare,
Like a bird in the wide air;
And, as the bird, it left no trace
In the heaven of your face.
In your stupidity I found
The sweet hush after a sweet sound.
All about you was the light
That dims the graying end of night;
Desire was the unrisen sun,
Joy the day not yet begun,
With tree whispering to tree,

Without wind, quietly.
Wisdom slept within your hair,
And Long-suffering was there,
And, in the flowing of your dress,
Undiscerning Tenderness.
And when you thought, it seemed to me,
Infinitely, and like a sea,
About the slight world you had known
Your vast unconsciousness was thrown. . . .
O haven without wave or tide!
Silence, in which all songs have died!
Holy book, where hearts are still!
And home at length under the hill!
O mother quiet, breasts of peace,
Where love itself would faint and cease!
O infinite deep I never knew,
I would come back, come back to you;
Find you, as a pool unstirred,
Kneel down by you, and never a word;
Lay my head, and nothing said,
In your hands, ungarlanded.
And a long watch you would keep;
And I should sleep, and I should sleep!

NINETEEN-FOURTEEN

I—PEACE

Now, God be thanked who has matched us with his hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping!
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary;
Leave the sick hearts that honor could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love!
Oh, we who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,

Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there,
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

II—SAFETY

Dear! of all happy in the hour, most blest
He who has found our hid security,
Assured in the dark tides of the world that rest,
And heard our word, "Who is so safe as we?"
We have found safety with all things undying—
The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,
The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,
And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain forever.
War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all Death's endeavor;
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

III—THE DEAD

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene
That men call age; and those who would have been
Their sons they gave, their immortality.
Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honor has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

IV—THE DEAD

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
  Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
  And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
  Slumber and waking; loved, gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
  Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended
There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
  Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance,
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
  Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

V—SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
  That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
  In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
  Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
  Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
  A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
    Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
  And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
    In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Witter Bynner

GRASS-TOPS

What bird are you in the grass-tops?
  Your poise is enough of an answer,
With your wing-tips like up-curving fingers
  Of the slow-moving hands of a dancer—

And what is so nameless as beauty,
  Which poets, who give it a name,
Are only unnaming forever?—
  Content, though it go, that it came.

DREAM

I had returned from dreaming—
When there came the look of you,
And I could not tell after that;
And the sound of you
And I could not tell;
And at last the touch of you
And I could tell then less than ever;
Though I silvered and fell
As at the very mountain-brim
Of dream.

For how could the motion of a shadow in a field
Be a person?
Or the flash of an oriole-wing
Be a smile?
Or the turn of a leaf on a stream
Be a hand?
Or a bright breath of sun
Be lips?

I can reach out and out—and nothing will be there;
None of these things are true.
All of them are dreams—
There are neither streams
Nor leaves nor orioles nor you.

TO CELIA

CONSUMMATION

There was a strangeness on your lips,
  Lips that had been so sure;
You still were mine but in eclipse,
  Beside me but obscure.

There was a cloud upon your heart;
  For, Celia, where you lay,
Death, come to break your life apart,
  Had led your love away.

Through the cold distance of your eyes
  You could no longer see.
But when you died, you heard me rise
  And followed suddenly.

And close beside me, looking down
  As I did on the dead,
You made of time a wedding-gown,
  Of space a marriage-bed.

I took, in you, death for a wife,
  You married death in me,
Singing, "There is no other life,
  No other God than we!"

NIGHT

Celia, when you bid me
  Good-morning, I awake
Quick again on your account,
  Eager for your sake.

Yet at morning, or at noon
  In the clearest light,
Is there any voice as near
  As your voice at night?

Or has anyone alive
  Ever come and said
Anything as intimate
  As you are saying, dead?

DURING A CHORALE BY CESAR FRANCK

In an old chamber softly lit
  We heard the Chorale played,
And where you sat, an exquisite
Image of life and lover of it,
  Death sang a serenade.

I know now, Celia, what you heard,
  And why you turned and smiled.
It was the white wings of a bird
Offering flight, and you were stirred
  Like an adventurous child.

Death sang: "Oh, lie upon your bier,
  Uplift your countenance!"
Death bade me be your cavalier,
Called me to march and shed no tear,
  But sing to you and dance.

And when you followed, lured and led
By those mysterious wings,
And when I heard that you were dead,
I could not weep. I sang instead,
As a true lover sings.

Today a room is softly lit;
I hear the Chorale played.
And where you come, an exquisite
Image of death and lover of it,
Life sings a serenade.

SONGS ASCENDING

Love has been sung a thousand ways—
So let it be;
The songs ascending in your praise
Through all my days
Are three.

Your cloud-white body first I sing;
Your love was heaven's blue,
And I, a bird, flew carolling
In ring on ring
Of you.

Your nearness is the second song;
When God began to be,
And bound you strongly, right or wrong,
With his own thong,
To me.

But oh, the song, eternal, high
That tops these two!—
You live forever, you who die;
I am not I
But you.

GRIEVE NOT FOR BEAUTY

Almost the body leads the laggard soul; bidding it see
The beauty of surrender, the tranquillity
Of fusion with the earth. The body turns to dust
Not only by a sudden whelming thrust
Or at the end of a corrupting calm,
But oftentimes anticipates, and entering flowers and trees
Upon a hillside or along the brink
Of streams, encounters instances
Of its eventual enterprise:
Inhabits the enclosing clay,
In rhapsody is caught away
In a great tide
Of beauty, to abide
Translated through the night and day
Of time, and by the anointing balm
Of earth to outgrow decay.

Hark in the wind—the word of silent lips!
Look where some subtle throat, that once had wakened lust,
Lies clear and lovely now, a silver link
Of change and peace!
Hollows and willows and a river-bed,
Anemones and clouds,
Raindrops and tender distances
Above, beneath,
Inherit and bequeath
Our far-begotten beauty. We are wed
With many kindred who were seeming dead.
Only the delicate woven shrouds
Are vanished, beauty thrown aside
To honor and uncover
A deeper beauty—as the veil that slips
Breathless away between a lover
And his bride.

So, by the body, may the soul surmise
The beauty of surrender, the tranquillity

Of fusion: when, set free
From semblance of mortality,
Yielding its dust the richer to endue
A common avenue
Of earth for other souls to journey through,
It shall put on in purer guise
The mutual beauty of its destiny.
And who shall fear for his identity,
And who shall cling to the poor privacy
Of incompleteness, when the end explains
That what pride forfeits, beauty gains!
Therefore, O spirit, as a runner strips
Upon a windy afternoon,
Be unencumbered of what troubles you—
Arise with grace
And greatly go, the wind upon your face!

Grieve not for the invisible transported brow
On which like leaves the dark hair grew;
Nor for the lips of laughter that are now
Laughing inaudibly in sun and dew;
Nor for the limbs that, fallen low
And seeming faint and slow,
Shall alter and renew
Their shape and hue
Like birches white before the moon,
Or a young apple-tree
In spring, or the round sea;
And shall pursue
More ways of swiftness than the swallow dips
Among . . . and find more winds than ever blew
The straining sails of unimpeded ships!

. . . . . .

For never beauty dies
That lived. Nightly the skies
Assemble stars, the light of many eyes,
And daily brood on the communal breath—
Which we call death.

Joseph Campbell

AT HARVEST

Earth travails,
Like a woman come to her time.

The swaying corn-haulms
In the heavy places of the field
Cry to be gathered.
Apples redden, and drop from their rods.
Out of their sheath of prickly leaves
The marrows creep, fat and white.
The blue pallor of ripeness
Comes on the fruit of the vine.

Fecund and still fecund
After æons of bearing:
Not old, not dry, not wearied out;
But fresh as when the unseen Right Hand
First moved on Brí,
And the candle of day was set,
And dew fell from the stars' feet,
And cloths of greenness covered thee.

Let me kiss thy breasts:
I am thy son and lover.

Womb-fellow am I of the sunburnt wheat,
Friendly gossip of the mearings;
Womb-fellow of the dark and sweet-scented apple;
Womb-fellow of the gourd and of the grape:
Like begotten, like born.

And yet,
Without a lover's knowledge of thy secrets
I would walk the ridges of the hills,
Kindless and desolate.

What is the storm-driven moon to me,
Seed of another father?
What the flooding of the well of dawn?
What the hollow, red with rowan fire?
What the king-fern?
What the belled heath?
What the spread of heron's wing,
Or glint of spar,
Caught from the pit
Of a deserted quarry?

Let me kiss thy breasts:
I am thy son and lover.

ON WAKING

Sleep, gray brother of death,
Has touched me,
And passed on.

I arise, facing the east—
Golden termon
From which light,
Signed with dew and fire,
Dances.

Hail, essence, hail!
Fill the windows of my soul
With beauty:
Pierce and renew my bones:
Pour knowledge into my heart
As water
From a quenchless spring.

Cualann is bright before thee.
Its rocks melt and swim:
The secret they have kept
From the ancient nights of darkness
Flies like a bird.

What mourns?
Cualann's secret flying,
A lost voice
In lonely fields.

What rejoices?
My song lifted praising thee.

Praise! Praise! Praise!
Praise out of tubas, whose bronze
Is the unyoked strength of bulls;
Praise upon harps, whose strings
Are the light movements of birds;
Praise of leaf, praise of blossom,
Praise of the red, human clay;
Praise of grass,
Fire-woven veil of the temple;
Praise of the shapes of clouds;
Praise of the shadows of wells;
Praise of worms, of fetal things,
And of the things in time's thought
Not yet begotten:
To thee, queller of sleep,
Looser of the snare of death.

THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle
  In a holy place,
So is the beauty
  Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance
  Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
  With her travail done.

Her brood gone from her,
And her thoughts as still
As the waters
Under a ruined mill.

Nancy Campbell

THE APPLE-TREE

I saw the archangels in my apple-tree last night,
I saw them like great birds in the starlight—
Purple and burning blue, crimson and shining white.

And each to each they tossed an apple to and fro,
And once I heard their laughter gay and low;
And yet I felt no wonder that it should be so.

But when the apple came one time to Michael's lap
I heard him say: "The mysteries that enwrap
The earth and fill the heavens can be read here, mayhap."

Then Gabriel spoke: "I praise the deed, the hidden thing."
"The beauty of the blossom of the spring
I praise," cried Raphael. Uriel: "The wise leaves I sing."

And Michael: "I will praise the fruit, perfected, round,
Full of the love of God, herein being bound
His mercies gathered from the sun and rain and ground."

So sang they till a small wind through the branches stirred,
And spoke of coming dawn; and at its word
Each fled away to heaven, winged like a bird.

THE MONKEY

I saw you hunched and shivering on the stones,
The bleak wind piercing to your fragile bones,

Your shabby scarlet all inadequate:
A little ape that had such human eyes
They seemed to hide behind their miseries—
Their dumb and hopeless bowing down to fate—
Some puzzled wonder. Was your monkey soul
Sickening with memories of gorgeous days,
Of tropic playfellows and forest ways,
Where, agile, you could swing from bole to bole
In an enchanted twilight with great flowers
For stars; or on a bough the long night hours
Sit out in rows, and chatter at the moon?
Shuffling you went, your tiny chilly hand
Outstretched for what you did not understand;
Your puckered mournful face begging a boon
That but enslaved you more. They who passed by
Say nothing sorrowful; gave laugh or stare,
Unheeding that the little antic there
Played in the gutter such a tragedy.

Emanuel Carnevali

IN THIS HOTEL

The headwaiter says:
"Nice day today!"
He smiles sentimentally.
The headwaiter says:
"It will rain today!"
He frowns gracefully.
Those are the greetings, every morning,
To every old lady,
And every old gent,
And every old rogue,
And every young couple—
To every guest.

And I, who do not sleep, who wait and watch for the dawn,
One day I would come down to the world.

I would have a trumpet as powerful as the wind,
And I would trumpet out to the world
The splendid commonplace:
"Nice day today!"
And another day I would cry out in despair,
"It will rain today!"
For every old lady,
And every old gent,
And every old rogue,
And every young couple—
Are they not guests in this hotel,
Where the ceiling is the sky
And the floor is the earth,
And the rooms are the houses?

But I, I—this wretched, tired thing—
May I ask for a job
As headwaiter
Of this hotel?

SERMON

Chao-Mong-Mu freely laid his hands over the sky:
You do not know how to lay your hands over the breasts of your beloved.

Chao-Mong-Mu made the tree dance at his will:
You do not know how to hug a rough tree and say "darling" to it.

Chao-Mong-Mu magnificently ran a shaft of sunlight to smash against the treetops:
You walk carefully, carefully, and fend off the sunlight with your grey clothes, although you're very poor.

Chao-Mong-Mu painted a sky that was a pink-fleshed vase; then he became a very small thing and hid in the vase:
You build yourselves immense houses to live in, and you are afraid even there.

INVOCATION TO DEATH

Let me
Close my eyes tight.
Still my arms,
Let me be.
Then, come.
Let me be utterly alone:
Do not let the awful understanding that comes with
The thought of death
Bother me.

Your love was not strong enough to hold me.

Death takes things away:
I have them here in my hands,
The rags.

I do not understand the cosmic humor
That lets foolish impossibilities, like me, live.

I have made a mess of it,
But I am no debtor.

It's the yearn of a nervous man,
The yearn for peace,
The curiosity for a word:
Forever.

If She would only come quietly,
Like a lady—
The first lady and the last.

Just not to hear any longer
The noise swelling from the morning streets,
Nor the two desperate sparrows chirruping;
Just not to fear any longer
The landlady.

Willa Sibert Cather

THE PALATINE

In the "Dark Ages"

"Have you been with the king to Rome,
Brother, big brother?"
"I've been there and I've come home.
Back to your play, little brother."

"Oh, how high is Cæsar's house,
Brother, big brother?"
"Goats about the doorways browse;
Night-hawks nest in the burnt roof-tree.
Home of the wild bird and home of the bee,
A thousand chambers of marble lie
Wide to the sun and the wind and the sky.
Poppies we find amongst our wheat
Grow on Cæsar's banquet seat.
Cattle crop and neat-herds drowse
On the floors of Cæsar's house."

"But what has become of Cæsar's gold,
Brother, big brother?"
"The times are bad and the world is old—
Who knows the where of the Cæsar's gold?
Night comes black o'er the Cæsar's hill;
The wells are deep and the tales are ill;
Fireflies gleam in the damp and mold—
All that is left of the Cæsar's gold.
Back to your play, little brother."

"What has become of the Cæsar's men,
Brother, big brother?"
"Dogs in the kennel and wolf in the den
Howl for the fate of the Cæsar's men,
Slain in Asia, slain in Gaul,
By Dacian border and Persian wall.

Rhineland orchard and Danube fen
Fatten their roots on Cæsar's men."

"Why is the world so sad and wide,
Brother, big brother?"
"Saxon boys by their fields that bide
Need not know if the world is wide.
Climb no mountain but Shere-end Hill,
Cross no water but goes to mill.
Ox in the stable and cow in the byre,
Smell of the wood-smoke and sleep by the fire;
Sun-up in seed time—a likely lad
Hurts not his head that the world is sad.
Back to your play, little brother."

SPANISH JOHNNY

The old West, the old time,
The old wind singing through
The red, red grass a thousand miles—
And, Spanish Johnny, you!
He'd sit beside the water ditch
When all his herd was in,
And never mind a child, but sing
To his mandolin.

The big stars, the blue night,
The moon-enchanted lane;
The olive man who never spoke,
But sang the songs of Spain.
His speech with men was wicked talk—
To hear it was a sin;
But those were golden things he said
To his mandolin.

The gold songs, the gold stars,
The world so golden then;
And the hand so tender to a child—
Had killed so many men.

He died a hard death long ago
Before the Road came in—
The night before he swung, he sang
To his mandolin.

Padraic Colum

POLONIUS AND THE BALLAD-SINGERS

A gaunt-built woman and her son-in-law—
A broad-faced fellow, with such flesh as shows
Nothing but easy nature—and his wife,
The woman's daughter, who spills all her talk
Out of a wide mouth, but who has eyes as gray
As Connemara, where the mountain-ash
Shows berries red indeed: they enter now—
Our country singers!

"Sing, my good woman, sing us some romance
That has been round your chimney-nooks so long
'Tis nearly native; something blown here
And since made racy—like yon tree, I might say,
Native by influence if not by species,
Shaped by our winds. You understand, I think?"

"I'll sing the song, sir."

Tonight you see my face—
Maybe nevermore you'll gaze
On the one that for you left his friends and kin;
For by the hard commands
Of the lord that rules these lands
On a ship I'll be borne from Cruckaunfinn!

Oh, you know your beauty bright
Has made him think delight
More than from any fair one he will gain;
Oh, you know that all his will

Strains and strives around you till
As the hawk upon his hand you are as tame!

Then she to him replied:
I'll no longer you deny,
And I'll let you have the pleasure of my charms;
For tonight I'll be your bride,
And whatever may betide
It's we will lie in one another's arms!

"You should not sing
With body doubled up and face aside.
There is a climax here—'It's we will lie'—
Hem—passionate! And what does your daughter sing?"

"A song I like when I do climb bare hills—
'Tis all about a hawk."

No bird that sits on rock or bough
Has such a front as thine;
No king that has made war his trade
Such conquest in his eyne!
I mark thee rock-like on the rock
Where none can see a shape.
I climb, but thou dost climb with wings,
And like a wish escape,
She said—
And like a wish escape!

No maid that kissed his bonny mouth
Of another mouth was glad;
Such pride was in our chieftain's eyes,
Such countenance he had!
But since they made him fly the rocks,
Thou, creature, art my quest.
Then lift me with thy steady eyes.
If then to tear my breast,
She said—
If then to tear my breast!

"The songs they have
Are the last relics of the feudal world:
Women will keep them—byzants, doubloons,
When men will take up songs that are as new
As dollar bills. What song have you, young man?"

"A song my father had, sir. It was sent him
From across the sea, and there was a letter with it,
Asking my father to put it to a tune
And sing it all roads. He did that, in troth;
And five pounds of tobacco were sent with the song
To fore-reward him. I'll sing it for you now—
The Baltimore Exile."

The house I was bred in—ah, does it remain
Low walls and loose thatch standing lone in the rain,
With the clay of the walls coming through with its stain,
Like the blackbird's left nest in the briar!

Does a child there give heed to the song of the lark,
As it lifts and it drops till the fall of the dark,
When the heavy-foot kine trudge home from the paurk,
Or do none but the red-shank now listen?

The sloe-bush, I know, grows close to the well,
And its long-lasting blossoms are there, I can tell,
When the kid that was yeaned when the first ones befell
Can jump to the ditch that they grow on!

But there's silence on all. Then do none ever pass
On the way to the fair or the pattern or mass
Do the gray-coated lads drive the ball through the grass
And speed to the sweep of the hurl?

O youths of my land! Then will no Bolivar
Ever muster your ranks for delivering war
Will your hopes become fixed and beam like a star
Will they pass like the mists from your fields?

The swan and the swallows, the cuckoo and crake,
May visit my land and find hillside and lake.
And I send my song. I'll not see her awake—
I'm too old a bird to uncage now!

"Silver's but lead in exchange for songs,
But take it and spend it."

"We will. And may we meet your honor's like
Every day's end."

"A tune is more lasting than the voice of the birds."

"A song is more lasting than the riches of the world."

NOTE. The last stanza in the first ballad sung is a fragment of an old country song; the rest of it, with the other two ballads, is invented. But they are all in the convention of songs still sung by strolling ballad-singers. I have written the common word for pasture-field "paurk" so as not to give a wrong association: it is Gaelic for pasture field, and is always used in Irish country speech in that sense. The two last lines spoken are translations of a Gaelic phrase which has been used by Dr. Douglas Hyde as a motto for his collection of Connacht love songs. P. C.

THE SEA BIRD TO THE WAVE

On and on,
O white brother!
Thunder does not daunt thee!
How thou movest!
By thine impulse—
With no wing!
Fairest thing
The wide sea shows me!
On and on,
O white brother!
Art thou gone!

OLD MEN COMPLAINING

First Old Man

(He threw his crutched stick down: there came
Into his face the anger flame,
And he spoke viciously of one
Who thwarted him—his son's son.
He turned his head away.)

I hate
Absurdity of language, prate
From growing fellows. We'd not stay
About the house the whole of a day
When we were young,
Keeping no job and giving tongue!

Not us, in troth! We would not come
For bit or sup, but stay from home
If we gave answers, or we'd creep
Back to the house, and in we'd peep
Just like a corncrake.

My grandson and his comrades take
A piece of coal from you, from me
A log, or sod of turf, maybe;
And in some empty place they'll light
A fire, and stay there all night,
A wisp of lads! Now understand
The blades of grass under my hand
Would be destroyed by company!
There's no good company: we go
With what is lowest to the low!
He stays up late, and how can he
Rise early? Sure he lags in bed,
And she is worn to a thread
With calling him—his grandmother.
She's an old woman, and she must make
Stir when the birds are half awake
In dread he'd lose this job like the other!

Second Old Man

They brought yon fellow over here,
And set him up for an overseer:
Though men from work are turned away
That thick-necked fellow draws full pay—
Three pounds a week. . . . They let burn down
The timber-yard behind the town
Where work was good; though firemen stand
In boots and brasses big and grand
The crow of a cock away from the place.
And with the yard they let burn too
The clock in the tower, the clock I knew
As well as I know the look in my face.

Third Old Man

The fellow you spoke of has broken his bounds—
He came to skulk inside of these grounds:
Behind the bushes he lay down
And stretched full hours in the sun.
He rises now, and like a crane
He looks abroad. He's off again:
Three pounds a week, and still he owes
Money in every street he goes,
Hundreds of pounds where we'd not get
The second shilling of a debt.

First Old Man

Old age has every impediment,
Vexation and discontent.
The rich have more than we: for bit
The cut of bread, and over it
The scrape of hog's lard, and for sup
Warm water in a cup.
But different sorts of feeding breaks
The body more than fasting does
With pains and aches.

I'm not too badly off, for I
Have pipe and tobacco, a place to lie,

A nook to myself; but from my hand
Is taken the strength to back command.
I'm broken, and there's gone from me
The privilege of authority.

I heard them speak—
The old men heavy on the sod,
Letting their angers come
Between them and the thought of God.

A DROVER

To Meath of the pastures,
  From wet hills by the sea,
Through Leitrim and Longford,
  Go my cattle and me.

I hear in the darkness
  Their slipping and breathing—
I name them the byways
  They're to pass without heeding;

Then the wet winding roads,
  Brown bogs with black water;
And my thoughts on white ships,
  And the King o' Spain's daughter.

O farmer, strong farmer!—
  You can spend at the fair;
But your face you must turn
  To your crops and your care.

And soldiers, red soldiers!—
  You've seen many lands;
But you walk two by two,
  And by captain's commands.

Oh, the smell of the beasts,
  The wet wind in the morn;

And the proud and hard earth
Never broken for corn!

And the crowds at the fair,
The herds loosened and blind,
Loud words and dark faces
And the wild blood behind!

(O strong men, with your best
I would strive breast to breast—
I could quiet your herds
With my words, with my words.)

I will bring you, my kine,
Where there's grass to the knee;
But you'll think of scant croppings
Harsh with salt of the sea.

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

Oh, to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains,
And pendulum swinging up and down!
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush;
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house—a house of my own—
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

THE WILD ASS

The Wild Ass lounges, legs struck out
In vagrom unconcern:
The tombs of Achæmedian kings
Are for those hooves to spurn.

And all of rugged Tartary
Lies with him on the ground,
The Tartary that knows no awe,
That has nor ban nor bound.

The wild horse from the herd is plucked
To bear a saddle's weight;
The boar is one keeps covert, and
The wolf runs with a mate;

But he 's the solitary of space,
Curbless and unbeguiled;
The only being that bears a heart
Not recreant to the wild.

Grace Hazard Conkling

REFUGEES

Belgium—1914

"Mother, the poplars cross the moon;
The road runs on, so white and far
We shall not reach the city soon:
Oh, tell me where we are!"

"Have patience, patience, little son,
And we shall find the way again:
(God show me the untraveled one!
God give me rest from men!)"

"Mother, you did not tell me why
You hurried so to come away.
I saw big soldiers riding by;
I should have liked to stay."

"Hush, little man, and I will sing
Just like a soldier, if I can—
They have a song for everything.
Listen, my little man!

"This is the soldiers' marching song:
We'll play this is the village street—"
"Yes, but this road is very long,
And stones have hurt my feet."

"Nay, little pilgrim, up with you!
And yonder field shall be the town.
I'll show you how the soldiers do
Who travel up and down.

"They march and sing and march again,
Not minding all the stones and dust:
They go (God grant me rest from men!)
Forward, because they must."

"Mother, I want to go to sleep."
"No, darling! Here is bread to eat!
(O God, if thou couldst let me weep,
Or heal my broken feet!)"

"THE LITTLE ROSE IS DUST, MY DEAR"

The little rose is dust, my dear;
The elfin wind is gone
That sang a song of silver words
And cooled our hearts with dawn.

And what is left to hope, my dear,
Or what is left to say?
The rose, the little wind and you
Have gone so far away.

GUADALUPE

No matter how you love me
You cannot keep me home.
Along the airy lane of bells
Beyond the peacock dome,

I know the way to travel,
And I shall go at will—
Where the stone sails await the wind
Upon the holy hill.

The mariners who made them,
They have been long away:
But when a wind from Heaven blows,
They will come back some day;

And I shall hear them singing
And watch the stone sails fill,
Till the white city like a ship
Moves out across the hill.

Hilda Conkling

A LITTLE GIRL'S SONGS

Rosy plum-tree, think of me
When Spring comes down the world.

TIRED

Sparkle up, little tired flower
Leaning in the grass!
Did you find the rain of night
Too heavy to hold?

WATER

The world turns softly,
Not to spill its lakes and rivers.
The water is held in its arms,
And the sky is held in the water.
What is water,
That pours silver
And can hold the sky?

THUNDER SHOWER

The dark cloud raged:
Gone was the morning light.
The big drops darted down,
The storm stood tall on the rose-trees;
And the bees that were getting honey
Out of wet roses,
The hiding bees would not come out of the flowers
Into the rain.

MORNING

There is a brook I must hear
Before I go to sleep.
There is a birch-tree I must visit
Every night of clearness.

I have to do some dreaming,
I have to listen a great deal,
Before light comes back
By a silver arrow of cloud,
And I rub my eyes and say,
It must be morning on this hill!

POPLARS

The poplars bow forward and back;
They are like a fan waving very softly.
They tremble,
For they love the wind in their feathery branches.
They love to look down at the shallows,
At the mermaids
On the sandy shore.
They love to look into morning's face
Cool in the water.

YELLOW SUMMER-THROAT

Yellow summer-throat sat singing
In a bending spray of willow tree.
Thin fine green-y lines on his throat,
The ruffled outside of his throat,
Trembled when he sang.
He kept saying the same thing—
The willow did not mind.
I knew what he said, I knew!—
But how can I tell you?
I have to watch the willow bend in the wind.

NIGHT GOES RUSHING BY

Night goes hurrying over
Like sweeping clouds.
The birds are nested, their song is silent;
The wind says *oo-oo-oo* through the trees
For their lullaby.
The moon shines down on the sleeping birds.

My cottage-roof is like a sheet of silk
Spun like a cobweb.
My apple-trees are bare as the oaks in the forest—
When the moon shines
I see no leaves.

I am alone and very quiet,
Hoping the moon may say something
Before long.

SNOW-FLAKE SONG

Snowflakes come in fleets
Like ships over the sea.
The moon shines down on the crusty snow;
The stars make the sky sparkle like gold-fish in a glassy bowl.
Bluebirds are gone now,
But they left their song behind them.
The moon seems to say,
It is time for summer when the birds come back
To pick up their lonesome songs.

POEMS

See the fur coats go by!
The morning is like the inside of a snow-apple.
I will curl myself cushion-shape
On the window-seat;
I will read poems by snow-light.
If I cannot understand them so,
I will turn them upside down
And read them by the red candles
Of garden brambles.

MY MIND AND I

We are friends,
My mind and I . . . . .
Yet sometimes we cannot understand each other,
As though a cloud had gone over the sun,
Or the pool all blind with trees
Had forgotten the sky.

LILACS

After lilacs come out,
The air loves to flow about them
The way water in wood-streams
Flows and loves and wanders.
I think the wind has a sadness
Lifting other leaves, other sprays . . . . .
I think the wind is a little selfish
About lilacs when they flower.

BUTTERFLY

As I walked through my garden
I saw a butterfly light on a flower.
His wings were pink and purple.
He spoke a small word; it was *Follow!*
"I cannot follow,"
I told him,
"I have to go the opposite way."

I AM

I am willowy boughs
For coolness;
I am gold-finch wings
For darkness;
I am a little grape
Thinking of September,
I am a very small violet
Thinking of May.

Alice Corbin

O WORLD

O world that changes under my hand,
  O brown world, bitter and bright,
And full of hidden recesses
  Of love and light—

O world, what use would there be to me
  Of power beyond power
To change, or establish new balance,
  To build, or deflower?

O world, what use would there be?
  Had I the Creator's fire,
I could not build you nearer
  To my heart's desire!

TWO VOICES

There is a country full of wine
And liquor of the sun,
Where sap is running all the year,
And spring is never done,
Where all is good as it is fair,
And love and will are one.
Old age may never come there,
But ever in today
The people talk as in a dream
And laugh slow time away.

But would you stay as now you are,
Or as a year ago?
Oh, not as then, for then how small
The wisdom we did owe!
Or if forever as today,
How little we could know!

Then welcome age, and fear not sorrow;
Today's no better than tomorrow.
Or yesterday that flies.
By the low light in your eyes,
By the love that in me lies,
I know we grow more lovely
Growing wise.

LOVE ME AT LAST

Love me at last, or if you will not,
Leave me;
Hard words could never, as these half-words,
Grieve me:
Love me at last—or leave me.

Love me at last, or let the last word uttered
Be but your own;
Love me, or leave me—as a cloud, a vapor,
Or a bird flown.
Love me at last—I am but sliding water
Over a stone.

HUMORESQUE

To some the fat gods
Give money,
To some love;

But the gods have given me
Money a n d love:

Not t o o m u c h money,
Nor q u i t e e n o u g h love!

To some the fat gods
Give money,
To some love.

ONE CITY ONLY

One city only, of all I have lived in,
And one house of that city, belong to me . . .
I remember the mellow light of afternoon
Slanting across brick buildings on the waterfront,

And small boats at rest on the floating tide,
And larger boats at rest in the near-by harbor;
And I know the tidal smell, and the smell of mud,
Uncovering oyster flats, and the brown bare toes of small negroes
With the mud oozing between them;
And the little figures leaping from log to log,
And the white children playing among them—
I remember how I played among them.
And I remember the recessed windows of the gloomy halls
In the darkness of decaying grandeur,
The feel of cool linen in the cavernous bed,
And the window curtain swaying gently
In the night air;
All the half-hushed noises of the street
In the southern town,
And the thrill of life—
Like a hand in the dark
With its felt, indeterminate meaning:
I remember that I knew there the stirring of passion,
Fear, and the knowledge of sin,
Tragedy, laughter, death. . . .

And I remember, too, on a dead Sunday afternoon
In the twilight,
When there was no one else in the house,
My self suddenly separated itself
And left me alone,
So that the world lay about me, lifeless.
I could not touch it, or feel it, or see it;
Yet I was there.
The sensation lingers:
Only the most vital threads
Hold me at all to living . . .
Yet I only live truly when I think of that house;
Only enter then into being.

One city only of all I have lived in,
And one house of that city, belong to me.

APPARITIONS

I

A thin gray shadow on the edge of thought
Hiding its wounds:
These are the wounds of sorrow—
It was my hand that made them;
And this gray shadow that resembles you
Is my own heart, weeping . . .
You sleep quietly beneath the shade
Of willows in the South.

II

When the cold dawn stood above the house-tops,
Too late I remembered the cry
In the night of a wild bird flying
Through the rain-filled sky.

THE POOL

Do you remember the dark pool at Nîmes,
The pool that had no bottom?
Shadowed by Druids ere the Romans came—
Dark, still, with little bubbles rising
So quietly level with its rim of stone
That one stood shuddering with the breathless fear
Of one short step?

My little sister stood beside the pool
As dark as that of Nîmes.
I saw her white face as she took the plunge;
I could not follow her, although I tried.
The silver bubbles circled to the brink,
And then the water parted:
With dream-white face my little sister rose
Dripping from that dark pool, and took the hands
Outstretched to meet her.

I may not speak to her of all she's seen;
She may not speak to me of all she knows,
Because her words mean nothing:
She chooses them
As one to whom our language is quite strange,
As children make queer words with lettered blocks
Before they know the way. . . .

My little sister stood beside the pool—
I could not plunge in with her, though I tried.

MUSIC

The ancient songs
Pass deathward mournfully.
R. A.

The old songs
Die.
Yes, the old songs die.
Cold lips that sang them,
Cold lips that sang them—
The old songs die,
And the lips that sang them
Are only a pinch of dust.

I saw in Pamplona
In a musty museum—
I saw in Pamplona
In a buff-colored museum—
I saw in Pamplona
A memorial
Of the dead violinist;
I saw in Pamplona
A memorial
Of Pablo Sarasate.

Dust was inch-deep on the cases,
Dust on the stick-pins and satins,

Dust on the badges and orders,
On the wreath from the oak of Guernica!

The old songs
Die—
And the lips that sang them.
Wreaths, withered and dusty,
Cuff-buttons with royal insignia,
These, in a musty museum,
Are all that is left of Sarasate.

WHAT DIM ARCADIAN PASTURES

What dim Arcadian pastures
  Have I known
That suddenly, out of nothing,
  A wind is blown,
Lifting a veil and a darkness,
  Showing a purple sea—
And under your hair the faun's eyes
  Look out on me?

NODES

The endless, foolish merriment of stars
  Beside the pale cold sorrow of the moon,
Is like the wayward noises of the world
  Beside my heart's uplifted silent tune.

The little broken glitter of the waves
  Beside the golden sun's intense white blaze,
Is like the idle chatter of the crowd
  Beside my heart's unwearied song of praise.

The sun and all the planets in the sky
  Beside the sacred wonder of dim space,
Are notes upon a broken, tarnished lute
  That God will some day mend and put in place.

And space, beside the little secret joy
  Of God that sings forever in the clay,
Is smaller than the dust we can not see,
  That yet dies not, till time and space decay.

And as the foolish merriment of stars
  Beside the cold pale sorrow of the moon,
My little song, my little joy, my praise,
  Beside God's ancient, everlasting rune.

IN THE DESERT

I have seen you, O king of the dead,
More beautiful than sunlight.

Your kiss is like quicksilver;
But I turned my face aside
Lest you should touch my lips.

In the field with the flowers
You stood darkly.

My knees trembled, and I knew
That no other joy would be like this.

But the warm field, and the sunlight,
And the few years of my girlhood,
Came before me, and I cried,
Not yet!
Not yet, O dark lover!

You were patient.
  —I know you will come again.

I have seen you, O king of the dead,
More beautiful than sunlight.

SAND PAINTINGS

The dawn breeze
Loosens the leaves
Of the trees;
The wide sky quivers
With awakened birds.

Two blue runners
Come from the east;
One has a scarf of silver,
One flings pine-boughs
Across the sky.

Noon-day stretched
In gigantic slumber—
Red copper cliffs
Rigid in sunlight.

An old man stoops
For a forgotten fagot—
Forehead of bronze
Between white locks
Bound with a rag of scarlet.

Where one door stands open,
The female moon
Beckons to darkness
And disappears.

ON THE ACEQUIA MADRE

Death has come to visit us today.
He is such a distinguished visitor
Everyone is overcome by his presence—
"Will you not sit down—take a chair?"

But Death stands in the doorway, waiting to depart;
He lingers like a breath in the curtains.
The whole neighborhood comes to do him honor—
Women in black shawls and men in black sombreros
Sitting motionless against white-washed walls;
And the old man with the grey stubby beard,
To whom death came,
Is stunned into silence.
Death is such a distinguished visitor,
Making even old flesh important.

But who now, I wonder, will take the old horse to pasture?

JUAN QUINTANA

The goat-herd follows his flock
  Over the sandy plain,
And the goats nibble the rabbit-bush
  Acrid with desert rain.

Old Juan Quintana's coat
  Is a faded purple blue,
And his hat is a warm plum-brown,
  And his trousers a tawny hue.

He is sunburnt like the hills,
  And his eyes have a strange goat-look;
And when I came on him alone,
  He suddenly quivered and shook.

Out in the hills all day
  The trees do funny things—
And a horse shaped like a man
  Rose up from the ground on wings.

And a burro came and stood
  With a cross, and preached to the flock,
While old Quintana sat
  As cold as ice on a rock.

And sometimes the mountains move,
And the mesa turns about;
And Juan Quintana thinks he's lost,
Till a neighbor hears him shout.

And they say with a little laugh
That he isn't quite right, up here;
And they'll have to get a *muchacho*
To help with the flock next year.

UNA ANCIANA MEXICANA

I've seen her pass with eyes upon the road—
An old bent woman in a bronze black shawl,
With skin as dried and wrinkled as a mummy's,
As brown as a cigar-box, and her voice
Like the low vibrant strings of a guitar.
And I have fancied from the girls about
What she was at their age, what they will be
When they are old as she. But now she sits
And smokes away each night till dawn comes round,
Thinking, beside the piñons' flame, of days
Long past and gone, when she was young—content
To be no longer young, her epic done:

For a woman has work and much to do,
And it's good at the last to know it's through,
And still have time to sit alone,
To have some time you can call your own.
It's good at the last to know your mind
And travel the paths that you traveled blind,
To see each turn and even make
Trips in the byways you did not take—
But that, *por Dios*, is over and done,
It's pleasanter now in the way we've come.
It's good to smoke, and none to say
What's to be done on the coming day,

No mouths to feed or coat to mend,
And none to call till the last long end.
Though one have sons and friends of one's own,
It's better at last to live alone.
For a man must think of soil to break,
And a woman's heart may fret and ache;
But when she is young she must curb her pride,
And her heart is tamed for the child at her side.
But when she is old her thoughts may go
Wherever they will, and none to know.
And night is the time to think and dream,
And not to get up with the dawn's first gleam;
Night is the time to laugh or weep,
And when dawn comes it is time to sleep . . .

When it's all over and there's none to care,
I mean to be like her and take my share
Of comfort when the long day's done,
And smoke away the nights, and see the sun
Far off, a shrivelled orange in a sky gone black,
Through eyes that open inward and look back.

A SONG FROM OLD SPAIN

What song of mine will live?
On whose lips will the words be sung
Long years after I am forgotten—
A name blown between the hills
Where some goat-herd
Remembers my love and passion?

He will sing of your beauty and my love;
Though it may be in another tongue,
To a strange tune,
In a country beyond the seas—
A seed blown by the wind—
He will sing of our love and passion.

Adelaide Crapsey

CINQUAINS

NOVEMBER NIGHT

Listen.
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
And fall.

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

"Why do
You thus devise
Evil against her?" "For that
She is beautiful, delicate;
Therefore."

THE GUARDED WOUND

If it
Were lighter touch
Than petal of flower resting
On grass, oh still too heavy it were,
Too heavy!

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

FATE DEFIED

As it
Were tissue of silver,
I'll wear, O fate, thy grey,
And go mistily radiant, clad
Like the moon.

THE PLEDGE

White doves of Cytherea, by your quest
Across the blue Heaven's bluest highest air,
And by your certain homing to Love's breast,
Still to be true and ever true—I swear.

EXPENSES

Little my lacking fortunes show
For this to eat and that to wear;
Yet laughing, Soul, and gaily go!
An obol pays the Stygian fare.

ADVENTURE

Sun and wind and beat of sea,
Great lands stretching endlessly . . .
Where be bonds to bind the free?
All the world was made for me!

DIRGE

Never the nightingale,
  O my dear,
Never again the lark
  Thou wilt hear;
Though dusk and the morning still

Tap at thy window-sill,
Though ever love call and call,
Thou wilt not hear at all,
My dear, my dear.

SONG

I make my shroud, but no one knows—
So shimmering fine it is and fair,
With stitches set in even rows.
I make my shroud, but no one knows.

In door-way where the lilac blows,
Humming a little wandering air,
I make my shroud and no one knows,
So shimmering fine it is and fair.

THE LONELY DEATH

In the cold I will rise, I will bathe
In waters of ice; myself
Will shiver, and shrive myself,
Alone in the dawn, and anoint
Forehead and feet and hands;
I will shutter the windows from light,
I will place in their sockets the four
Tall candles and set them a-flame
In the grey of the dawn; and myself
Will lay myself straight in my bed,
And draw the sheet under my chin.

TO THE DEAD IN THE GRAVEYARD UNDERNEATH MY WINDOW

Written in a Moment of Exasperation

How can you lie so still? All day I watch
And never a blade of all the green sod moves
To show where restlessly you turn and toss,
Or fling a desperate arm or draw up knees
Stiffened and aching from their long disuse.
I watch all night, and not one ghost comes forth
To take its freedom of the midnight hour.
Oh, have you no rebellion in your bones?
The very worms must scorn you where you lie—
A pallid, mouldering, acquiescent folk,
Meek habitants of unresented graves.
Why are you there in your straight row on row,
Where I must ever see you from my bed
That in your mere dumb presence iterate
The text so weary in my ears: "Lie still
And rest—be patient, and lie still and rest."
I'll not be patient! I will not lie still!
There is a brown road runs between the pines,
And further on the purple woodlands lie,
And still beyond blue mountains lift and loom;
And I would walk the road, and I would be
Deep in the wooded shade, and I would reach
The windy mountain-tops that touch the clouds.
My eyes may follow but my feet are held.
Recumbent as you others, must I too
Submit?—be mimic of your movelessness,
With pillow and counterpane for stone and sod?
And if the many sayings of the wise
Teach of submission, I will not submit,
But with a spirit all unreconciled
Flash an unquenched defiance to the stars.
Better it is to walk, to run, to dance;
Better it is to laugh and leap and sing,
To know the open skies of dawn and night,

To move untrammeled down the flaming noon:
And I will clamor it through weary days,
Keeping the edge of deprivation sharp;
Nor with the pliant speaking on my lips
Of resignation, sister to defeat.
I'll not be patient. I will not lie still.

And in ironic quietude who is
The despot of our days and lord of dust
Needs but, scarce heeding, wait to drop
Grim casual comment on rebellion's end;
"Yes, yes . . . Wilful and petulant, but now
As dead and quiet as the others are."
And this each body and ghost of you hath heard
That in your graves do therefore lie so still.

Gladys Cromwell

THE CROWNING GIFT

I have had courage to accuse;
And a fine wit that could upbraid;
And a nice cunning that could bruise;
And a shrewd wisdom, unafraid
Of what weak mortals fear to lose.

I have had virtue to despise
The sophistry of pious fools;
I have had firmness to chastise;
And intellect to make me rules,
To estimate and exorcise.

I have had knowledge to be true;
My faith could obstacles remove.
But now, by failure taught anew,
I would have courage now to love,
And lay aside the strength I knew.

FOLDED POWER

Sorrow can wait,
For there is magic in the calm estate
Of grief; lo, where the dust complies
Wisdom lies.

Sorrow can rest
Indifferent, with her head upon her breast;
Idle and hushed, guarded from fears;
Content with tears.

Sorrow can bide
With sealèd lids and hands unoccupied.
Sorrow can fold her latent might,
Dwelling with night.

But Sorrow will rise
From her dream of sombre and hushed eternities.
Lifting a child, she will softly move
With a mother's love.

She will softly rise.
Her embrace the dying will recognize,
Lifting them gently through strange delight
To a clearer light.

THE MOULD

No doubt this active will,
So bravely steeped in sun,
This will has vanquished Death
And foiled oblivion.

But this indifferent clay,
This fine experienced hand,
So quiet, and these thoughts
That all unfinished stand,

Feel death as though it were
A shadowy caress;
And win and wear a frail
Archaic wistfulness.

RENEWAL

Can this be love men yield me in return
For what I do? I hold a strange belief
That love is not a tribute, nor a leaf
Of laurel, nor a wage the soul can earn
By any kind of doing. The concern
Of love is need, and love is the spare sheaf
We glean from pain—the fruit of patient grief.
Can this be love men yield me? Nay. I spurn
Their recompense who could so long refrain
From giving. I myself will grant the gift
And prove what loving is. I'll finer sift
My sorrow, make new songs distilled from pain;
Above this hour of bitterness I'll lift
My spirit up and taste my grief again!

AUTUMN COMMUNION

This autumn afternoon
My fancy need invent
No untried sacrament.
Man can still commune
With Beauty as of old:
The tree, the wind's lyre,
The whirling dust, the fire—
In these my faith is told.

Beauty warms us all;
When horizons crimson burn,
We hold heaven's cup in turn.
The dry leaves gleaming fall,

Crumbs of mystical bread;
My dole of beauty I break,
Love to my lips I take,
And fear is quieted.

The symbols of old are made new:
I watch the reeds and the rushes,
The spruce trees dip their brushes
In the mountain's dusky blue;
The sky is deep like a pool;
A fragrance the wind brings over
Is warm like hidden clover,
Though the wind itself is cool.

Across the air, between
The stems and the grey things,
Sunlight a trellis flings.
In quietude I lean:
I hear the lifting zephyr
Soft and shy and wild;
And I feel earth gentle and mild
Like the eyes of a velvet heifer.

Love scatters and love disperses.
Lightly the orchards dance
In a lovely radiance.
Down sloping terraces
They toss their mellow fruits.
The rhythmic wind is sowing,
Softly the floods are flowing
Between the twisted roots.

What beauty need I own
When the symbol satisfies?
I follow services
Of tree and cloud and stone.
Color floods the world;
I am swayed by sympathy;
Love is a litany
In leaf and cloud unfurled.

H. D.

HERMES OF THE WAYS

I

The hard sand breaks,
And the grains of it
Are clear as wine.

Far off over the leagues of it,
The wind,
Playing on wide shore,
Piles little ridges,
And the great waves
Break over it.

But more than the many-foamed ways
Of the sea,
I know him
Of the triple path-ways,
Hermes,
Who awaits.

Dubious,
Facing three ways,
Welcoming wayfarers,
He whom the sea-orchard
Shelters from the west,
From the east
Weathers sea-wind;
Fronts the great dunes.

Wind rushes
Over the dunes,
And the coarse, salt-crusted grass
Answers.

Heu,
It whips round my ankles!

II

Small is
This white stream,
Flowing below ground
From the poplar-shaded hill;
But the water is sweet.

Apples on the small trees
Are hard,
Too small,
Too late ripened
By a desperate sun
That struggles through sea-mist.
The boughs of the trees
Are twisted
By many bafflings;
Twisted are
The small-leafed boughs.

But the shadow of them
Is not the shadow of the mast-head
Nor of the torn sails.

Hermes, Hermes,
The great sea foamed,
Gnashed its teeth about me;
But you have waited,
Where sea-grass tangles with
Shore-grass.

ORCHARD

I saw the first pear
As it fell.
The honey-seeking, golden-banded,
The yellow swarm,
Was not more fleet than I,

(Spare us from loveliness!)
And I fell prostrate,
Crying,
"You have flayed us with your blossoms;
Spare us the beauty
Of fruit-trees!"

The honey-seeking
Paused not;
The air thundered their song,
And I alone was prostrate.

O rough-hewn
God of the orchard,
I bring you an offering;
Do you, alone unbeautiful
Son of the god,
Spare us from loveliness.

These fallen hazel-nuts,
Stripped late of their green sheaths;
Grapes, red-purple,
Their berries
Dripping with wine;
Pomegranates already broken,
And shrunken figs,
And quinces untouched,
I bring you as offering.

THE POOL

Are you alive?
I touch you—
You quiver like a sea-fish.
I cover you with my net.
What are you, banded one?

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us—
Cover us with your pools of fir.

THE GARDEN

I

You are clear,
O rose, cut in rock;
Hard as the descent of hail.

I could scrape the color
From the petals,
Like spilt dye from a rock.

If I could break you
I could break a tree.

If I could stir
I could break a tree—
I could break you.

II

O wind, rend open the heat,
Cut apart the heat,
Rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
Through this thick air;
Fruit cannot fall into heat
That presses up and blunts
The points of pears,
And rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat:
Plough through it,
Turning it on either side
Of your path.

MOONRISE

Will you glimmer on the sea?
Will you fling your spear-head
On the shore?
What note shall we pitch?

We have a song,
On the bank we share our arrows—
The loosed string tells our note:

O flight,
Bring her swiftly to our song.
She is great,
We measure her by the pine-trees.

THE SHRINE

"She watches over the sea'

I

Are your rocks shelter for ships?
Have you sent galleys from your beach?
Are you graded, a safe crescent,
Where the tide lifts them back to port?
Are you full and sweet,
Tempting the quiet
To depart in their trading ships?

Nay, you are great, fierce, evil—
You are the land-blight.
You have tempted men,
But they perished on your cliffs.

Your lights are but dank shoals—
Slate and pebble and wet shells
And sea-weed fastened to the rocks.

It was evil—evil
When they found you,
When the quiet men looked at you.
They sought a headland
Shaded with ledge of cliff
From the wind-blast.

But you—you are unsheltered,
Cut with the weight of wind.
You shudder when it strikes,
Then lift, swelled with the blast.
You sink as the tide sinks,
You shrill under hail, and sound
Thunder when thunder sounds.

You are useless:
When the tides swirl
Your boulders cut and wreck
The staggering ships.

II

You are useless,
O grave, O beautiful.
The landsmen tell it—I have heard—
You are useless.

And the wind sounds with this,
And the sea,
Where rollers shot with blue
Cut under deeper blue.

Oh, but stay tender, enchanted
Where wave-lengths cut you
Apart from all the rest;
For we have found you

We watch the splendor of you,
We thread throat on throat of freesia
For your shelf.

You are not forgot,
O plunder of lilies,
Honey is not more sweet
Than the salt stretch of your beach.

III

Stay—stay—
But terror has caught us now.
We passed the men in ships,
We dared deeper than the fisher-folk;
And you strike us with terror,
O bright shaft.

Flame passes under us
And sparks that unknot the flesh—
Sorrow, splitting bone from bone;
Splendors thwart our eyes,
And rifts in the splendor—
Sparks and scattered light.

Many warned of this,
Men said:
"There are wrecks on the fore-beach,
Wind will beat your ship,
There is no shelter in that headland;
It is useless waste, that edge,
That front of rock—
Sea-gulls clang beyond the breakers,
None venture to that spot."

IV

But hail—
As the tide slackens,
As the wind beats out,
We hail this shore—

We sing to you,
Spirit between the headlands
And the further rocks.

Though oak-beams split,
Though boats and seamen flounder,
And the strait grind sand with sand
And cut boulders to sand and drift—

Your eyes have pardoned our faults,
Your hands have touched us;
You have leaned forward a little
And the waves can never thrust us back
From the splendor of your ragged coast.

HESPERIDES

FRAGMENT XXXVI

I know not what to do:
My mind is divided.
Sappho

I know not what to do—
My mind is rent.
Is song's gift best?
Is love's gift loveliest?
I know not what to do,
Now sleep has pressed
Weight on your eyelids.

Shall I break your rest,
Devouring, eager?
Is love's gift best?
Nay, song's the loveliest.
Yet, were you lost,
What rapture could I take from song?—
What song were left?

I know not what to do:
To turn and slake

The rage that burns,
With my breath burn
And trouble your cool breath—
So shall I turn and take
Snow in my arms,
(Is love's gift best?)

Yet flake on flake
Of snow were comfortless,
Did you lie wondering,
Wakened yet unawake.

Shall I turn and take
Comfortless snow within my arms,
Press lips to lips that answer not,
Press lips to flesh
That shudders not nor breaks?

Is love's gift best?—
Shall I turn and slake
All the wild longing?
Oh, I am eager for you!
As the Pleiads shake
White light in whiter water,
So shall I take you?

My mind is quite divided;
My minds hesitate,
So perfect matched
I know not what to do.
Each strives with each:
As two white wrestlers,
Standing for a match,
Ready to turn and clutch,
Yet never shake
Muscle or nerve or tendon;
So my mind waits
To grapple with my mind—
Yet I am quiet,
I would seem at rest.

I know not what to do.
Strain upon strain,
Sound surging upon sound,
Makes my brain blind;
As a wave line may wait to fall,
Yet waiting for its falling
Still the wind may take,
From off its crest,
White flake on flake of foam,
That rises
Seeming to dart and pulse
And rend the light,
So my mind hesitates
Above the passion
Quivering yet to break,
So my mind hesitates above my mind
Listening to song's delight.

I know not what to do.
Will the sound break,
Rending the night
With rift on rift of rose
And scattered light?
Will the sound break at last
As the wave hesitant,
Or will the whole night pass
And I lie listening awake?

AT BAIA

I should have thought
In a dream you would have brought
Some lovely perilous thing:
Orchids piled in a great sheath,
As who would say, in a dream,
"I send you this,
Who left the blue veins
Of your throat unkissed."

Why was it that your hands,
That never took mine—
Your hands that I could see
Drift over the orchid heads
So carefully;
Your hands, so fragile, sure to lift
So gently, the fragile flower stuff—
Ah, ah, how was it

You never sent, in a dream
The very form, the very scent,
Not heavy, not sensuous,
But perilous—perilous!—
Of orchids, piled in a great sheath,
And folded underneath on a bright scroll,
Some word:

Flower sent to flower;
For white hands the lesser white,
Less lovely, of flower leaf.

Or,

Lover to lover—no kiss,
No touch, but forever and ever this!

Mary Carolyn Davies

CLOISTERED

Tonight the little girl-nun died.
Her hands were laid
Across her breast; the last sun tried
To kiss her quiet braid;
And where the little river cried,
Her grave was made.

The little girl-nun's soul, in awe,
Went silently
To where her brother Christ she saw,

Under the Living Tree;
He sighed, and his face seemed to draw
Her tears, to see.

He laid his hands on her hands mild,
And gravely blessed;
"Blind, they that kept you so," he smiled,
With tears unguessed.
"Saw they not Mary held a child
Upon her breast?"

SONGS OF A GIRL

I

Perhaps,
God, planting Eden,
Dropped, by mistake, a seed
In Time's neighbor-plot,
That grew to be
This hour?

II

You and I picked up Life and looked at it curiously;
We did not know whether to keep it for a plaything or not.
It was beautiful to see, like a red firecracker,
And we knew, too, that it was lighted.
We dropped it while the fuse was still burning. . .

III

I am going to die too, flower, in a little while—
Do not be so proud.

IV

The sun is dying
Alone
On an island
In the bay.

Close your eyes, poppies—
I would not have you see death,
You are so young!

The sun falls
Like a drop of blood
From some hero.

We,
Who love pain,
Delight in this.

RUST

Iron, left in the rain
  And fog and dew,
With rust is covered. Pain
  Rusts into beauty too.

I know full well that this is so:
I had a heartbreak long ago.

THE DEAD MAKE RULES

The dead make rules, and I obey.
I too shall be dead some day.

Youth and maid who, past my death,
Have within your nostrils breath,

I pray you, for my own pain's sake,
Break the rules that I shall make!

Fannie Stearns Davis

PROFITS

Yes, stars were with me formerly.
(I also knew the wind and sea;
And hill-tops had my feet by heart.
Their shagged heights would sting and start
When I came leaping on their backs.
I knew the earth's queer crooked cracks,
Where hidden waters weave a low
And druid chant of joy and woe.)

But stars were with me most of all.
I heard them flame and break and fall.
Their excellent array, their free
Encounter with eternity,
I learned. And it was good to know
That where God walked, I too might go.

Now, all these things are passed. For I
Grow very old and glad to die.
What did they profit me, say you,
These distant bloodless things I knew?

Profit? What profit hath the sea
Of her deep-throated threnody?
What profit hath the sun, who stands
Staring on space with idle hands?
And what should God Himself acquire
From all the aeons' blood and fire?

My profit is as theirs: to be
Made proof against mortality:
To know that I have companied
With all that shines and lives, amid
So much the years sift through their hands,
Most mortal, windy, worthless sands.

This day I have great peace. With me
Shall stars abide eternally!

SOULS

My soul goes clad in gorgeous things,
  Scarlet and gold and blue.
And at her shoulder sudden wings
  Like long flames flicker through.

And she is swallow-fleet, and free
  From mortal bonds and bars.
She laughs, because eternity
  Blossoms for her with stars!

O folk who scorn my stiff gray gown,
  My dull and foolish face,
Can ye not see my soul flash down,
  A singing flame through space?

And folk, whose earth-stained looks I hate,
  Why may I not divine
Your souls, that must be passionate,
  Shining and swift, as mine?

H. L. Davis

PROUD RIDERS

We rode hard, and brought the cattle from brushy springs,
From heavy dying thickets, leaves wet as snow;
From high places, white-grassed, and dry in the wind;
Draws where the quaken-asps were yellow and white,
And the leaves spun and spun like money spinning.
We poured them out on the trail, and rode for town.

Men in the fields leaned forward in the wind,
Stood in the stubble and watched the cattle passing.
The wind bowed all, the stubble shook like a shirt.
We threw the reins by the yellow and black fields, and rode,
And came, riding together, into the town
Which is by the gray bridge, where the alders are.

The white-barked alder trees dropping big leaves,
Yellow and black, into the cold black water.
Children, little cold boys, watched after us—
The freezing wind flapped their clothes like windmill paddles.
Down the flat frosty road we crowded the herd:
High stepped the horses for us, proud riders in autumn.

RUNNING VINES

Look up, you loose-haired women in the field,
From work, and thoughtless picking at the ground.
Cease for a little: pay me a little heed.

It is early: the red leaves of the blackberry vines
Are hoar with frosty dew, the ground's still wet,
There is vapor over toward the summer fallow.
And you three make a garden, being put by—
Since you are too old for love you make a garden?

It is love with me, and not these dark red frosty leaves
The vines of which you root for garden-space.
You will be concerned, you three used up and set by:
I could speak of the red vines, of pastures, of young trees;
And you would dibble at love as you do the vine-roots.

It is early, but before your backs be warmed,
And before all this dew be cleared and shed,
I shall be half among your hearts with speech:
Love, and my sorrow, the disastrous passages,
So that you'll cease all gardening, dangle dark red
Vines in your hands not knowing it, and whisper.

They forget me for a little pride of old time.

IN THE FIELD

The young grass burnt up, so hot the air was:
And I was lying by her knee, near the cool low
Spring branch, in sight of the green shining meadow.
How red her mouth was, how fine her hair, and so cool—
Her hair was cool as the ground. I thought how red
Her mouth was, and wondered at her white wrists.
Another would have meddled, not have let me lie;
Another would have laughed when I put in items her beauty
But she was still, like any scene or the sky.

Her red mouth, her wrists so white. "This is cool blood,
And it is deep, since it colors your mouth only.
I wonder and wonder at you—do you seem best
Playing with your hand in the dirt, like any dumb person?
For then you are like a black river-bird at rest;
Or like a poet sitting on the stairs among
The people like yours, and talking familiarly with them.
I wonder at you moreover because of your people,
Whose daughters should not seem sweet, yet you seem to me
Pleasanter to touch than are the light breast-feathers
Of a bird; and your heart plays lowers, more like wind.
It is pleasure to lie by your knee here in the fields."

I say yet, the white alders and the willows' switching,
And the weaving of thin graceful weeds, pleased me more
Than to own pastures, because of her beauty. But say
Nothing like "Come away," because her people
Work with her now where about cold low springs the smoke
From waters at morning stains the cold air all day.

THE SPIRIT

In the early spring, the fattening young weeds
Appear, all green, their veins stretched, amongst their dead.
And every sand-hill, with its bundle of willow
And young green riding the sand, is my pleasant walk.

The river, every rock there, and the wind
Molding cold waves, have seen a spirit by day
Which I would see; and now that my heart's a poor hired one
Which owns no favor or love, but did awhile,
I walk my pleasant walks. Where the new dark red
Willows feather in sand against the sky,
I make out a spirit sitting by the new grass:
The sun shines yellow on the hair, and a wind blows
That would melt snow, but her face calls it on.
And her hands are quiet in her red sleeves all day.
"All my pleasure begins when you come to this place."
"I am sorry for it, spirit, yet I most wished it;
Has my heart commanding shamed me to your eyes?"
"Never in life shall these eyes see you shamed.
I half live, like a stalk, but no girl orders me."

MY STEP-GRANDFATHER

My step-grandfather sat during the noon spell
Against the wild crabapple tree, by the vines.
Flies about the high hot fern played, or fell
To his beard, or upon the big vein of his hand.
With their playing he seemed helpless and old, in a land
Where new stumps, piles of green brush, fresh-burnt pines,
Were young and stubborn. He mentioned the old times
As if he thought of this: "I have marched, and run
Over the old hills, old plowed land, with my gun
Bumping furrows—oh, years old. But in this new place
There is nothing I know. I ride a strange colt."

"You know old times, and have seen some big man's face:
Out of the old times, what do you remember most?"
"General Lee. Once they called us out in a cold
Plowed field, to parade for him. He was old with frost.
I remember our style of dress; my dead friends last long,
(I would have thought longer); and there were peaked women
Who watched us march, and joked with us as they were trimming

The green shoots of wild roses to eat. But these with me
Lack what the other has—they are not so strong.
And lost battles?—I would be prouder starving in rain
And beaten and running every day, with General Lee,
Than fat and warm, winning under another man."

Alone presently, I laid myself face down
To avoid seeing the field; and thought of how the book
Describes Esther; and imagined how that queen might look,
Preferred for beauty, in her old fields red and brown.
"I am like my step-grandfather," I thought, "and could
Follow whatever I love, blind and bold;
Or go hungry and in great shame, and, for a cause, be proud."
And I came to work, sad to see him so old.

THE OLD ARE SLEEPY

A slow spring between two wheat-fields. High on the hill
In the straight weeds the men walk sizing the wheat,
Sweating through dry soft ground where wild sunflowers are.
The wind blows dust in the faces of these old men,
And dust is all over their faces as they ride down,
As they ride toward the poplars about the distant house.

Do I not know? They will watch the green willows between
These very fields; rest a day or two, mend roads
Against the harvesting of this high grain; and sleep.
The old men have seen it and are content with it,
Content among the women, and all content—
Women who lie uneasy at night against them.

I know of this, and of the mouth of music which said,
"A small spring between the wheat-fields." I know the low hair,
And the beauty in which music is, as slow rain
Is in the willows when they dip over like hands.
I know her of whom you are proud, that before their sleep
They also behold her proudly—a distant spring's beauty.

Is this the distant spring's beauty? For in the rain
It shall all be changed, and the willows about it be darkened.
The old men have put the hills in foal; yet past
Sundown, and until the morning the headed wheat
Finds me, and I feel her mouth and low hair.
Cry for their pride in her, when you lie by them at night!

THE VALLEY HARVEST

Honey in the horn! I brought my horse from the water
And from the white grove of tall alders over the spring,
And brought him past a row of high hollyhocks
Which flew and tore their flowers thin as his mane.
And women there watched, with hair blown over their mouths;
Yet in watching the oat field they were quiet as the spring.

"Are the hollyhocks full bloomed? It is harvest then.
The hay falls like sand falling in a high wind
When the weeds blow and fly—but steady the sand falls.
It is harvest, harvest, and honey in the horn.
I would like to go out, in a few days, through the stubble-field,
And to all the springs—yours too we have known for years—
And to the bearing vines, and clean the berries from them."

Call, women!—why do you stand if not for your pride's sake?

But the women would neither call to me nor speak,
Nor to any man not mowing during their harvest.
They watched with their hair blowing, near the stalks.
In the row of red hollyhocks.
Quiet as the spring.
What is by the spring? A bird, and a few old leaves.

BY THE RIVER

I see a white river-bird, and I see the women
Among the weeds, the light of their dresses between
Quick willow leaves; and I see that there the wind
Comes like a bird from the river, and blows their dresses.

Today their pleasure's among willows and high cold weeds
Where the flood bred pale snapdragons in the shade.

I lie in the high grass by the spring at their door
And hear them across the white stubble of their own field's
Edge: along the willows in the sand where the reaper
Has never been driven, they go. It was the flood margin.
At the flood margin which they feared their pleasure is;
Their white dresses fly where the water felt at the young grain.

It seems they are silent, looking at the white bird.
"Does it follow us here?" And one, looking to the sky: "No,
There is nothing now till spring to be anxious for;
They are through reaping, the grain is gone, and two seasons
Are to come before spring comes: so enjoy the day."
They come pleasantly through high weeds, old foam in the branches.

Walter de la Mare

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
  Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
  Of the forest's ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
  Above the Traveller's head;
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
  "Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
  No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
  Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
  That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
  To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,

That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:
"Tell them I came, and no one answered
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

AN EPITAPH

Here lies a most beautiful lady:
Light of step and heart was she;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country.
But beauty vanishes; beauty passes;
However rare—rare it be;
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country?

WHEN THE ROSE IS FADED

When the rose is faded,
Memory may still dwell on
Her beauty shadowed,
And the sweet smell gone.

That vanishing loveliness,
  That burdening breath,
No bond of life hath then,
  Nor grief of death.

'Tis the immortal thought
  Whose passion still
Makes of the changing
  The unchangeable.

Oh, thus thy beauty,
  Loveliest on earth to me,
Dark with no sorrow, shines
  And burns, with thee.

THE LITTLE SALAMANDER

To Margot

When I go free,
I think 'twill be
A night of stars and snow,
And the wild fires of frost shall light
My footsteps as I go;
Nobody—nobody will be there
With groping touch, or sight,
To see me in my bush of hair
Dance burning through the night.

THE LINNET

Upon this leafy bush
  With thorns and roses in it,
Flutters a thing of light,
  A twittering linnet.
And all the throbbing world
  Of dew and sun and air
By this small parcel of life
  Is made more fair;

As if each bramble-spray
And mounded gold-wreathed furze,
Harebell and little thyme,
Were only hers;
As if this beauty and grace
Did to one bird belong,
And at a flutter of wing
Might vanish in song.

ALL THAT'S PAST

Very old are the woods;
And the buds that break
Out of the brier's boughs,
When March winds wake,
So old with their beauty are—
Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;
And the rills that rise
Where snow sleeps cold beneath
The azure skies
Sing such a history
Of come and gone
Their every drop is as wise
As Solomon.

Very old are we men;
Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
By Eve's nightingales.
We wake and whisper awhile,
But, the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
Of amaranth lie.

Lee Wilson Dodd

THE TEMPLE

Hear me, brother!
Boldly I stepped into the Temple,
Into the Temple where the God dwells
Veiled with Seven Veils,
Into the Temple of Unbroken Silence:
And my joyous feet, shod with crimson sandals,
Rang out on the tesselated pavement,
Rang out fearlessly
Like a challenge and a cry.
And there—in that shrouded solitude,
There—before the Seven Veils,
There—because of youth and youth's madness,
Because of love and love's unresting heart,
There did I sing three songs.
And my first song praised the eyes of a wanton;
And my second song praised the lips of a wanton;
And my third song praised the feet of a dancing girl.

Thus did I desecrate the Temple:
Thus did I stand before the Seven Veils
Proudly;
Thus did I wait upon the God's Voice—
Proudly—
And the sudden shaft of death. . . .
But no Voice stirred the Seven Veils,
Though I stood long. . . .

And my knees shook,
My bones were afraid. . . .

Swiftly I loosed the crimson sandals,
And, tearing them from off my feet,
Crept shuddering forth.

Hear me, brother!
Now am I as one stricken with palsy,
Now am I sick with the close ache of terror;
Now am I as one who, having tasted poison,
Cowers, waiting for the pang.

For the God spake not. . . .

And the sense of my littleness is upon me:
And I am a worm in my own sight,
Trodden and helpless;
A casual grain of sand
Indistinguishable amid a million grains.
And I take no pleasure now in youth
Nor in youth's madness,
In love
Nor in love's unresting heart;
And I praise no longer the eyes of a wanton,
Nor the lips of a wanton,
Nor the light feet of a dancing girl.

THE COMRADE

Call me friend or foe,
  Little I care!
I go with all who go
  Daring to dare.

I am the force,
  I am the fire,
I am the secret source
  Of desire.

I am the urge,
  The spur and thong:
Moon of the tides that surge
  Into song.

Call me friend or foe,
Little care I!
I go with all who go
Singing to die.

Call me friend or foe. . . .
Taking to give,
I go with all who go
Dying to live.

Glenn Ward Dresbach

SONGS OF THE PLAINS

I

I saw a grown girl coming down
The field with water for the men.
Her hair fell golden in the wind—
She stopped and bound it up again.

Her thin dress by the wind was pressed
(Was it in passion or in play?)
Against the full growth of her breast . . . .
The men looked up. She looked away.

II

You saw me staring at the girl
And then you stared at me.
Why did you come so close, and kiss
My lips so passionately?
I would not have you quite so young
Or quite so shy as she!

III

A gypsy passed me with a song
Where men went out to sow,
And he went down the winding road
Where the maples grow.

And still his song came back to me
When he was far away:
"The Flask holds but a pint of wine—
Tomorrow is Today!

"My love has made a tent for me
From stars above the hill—
Go break your heart, and build yourself
A stone house, if you will!"

IV

I would build myself a house
On this mountain-top today,
Not to shun the world, or feel
It was shutting me away,
But that I might come at times
Little things had baffled me,
And look out, at set of sun,
On immensity.

John Drinkwater

SUNRISE ON RYDAL WATER

To E. de S.

Come down at dawn from windless hills
Into the valley of the lake,
Where yet a larger quiet fills
The hour, and mist and water make
With rocks and reeds and island boughs
One silence and one element,
Where wonder goes surely as once
It went
By Galilean prows.

Moveless the water and the mist,
Moveless the secret air above,

Hushed, as upon some happy tryst
  The poised expectancy of love;
What spirit is it that adores
  What mighty presence yet unseen?
What consummation works apace
  Between
    These rapt enchanted shores?

Never did virgin beauty wake
  Devouter to the bridal feast
Than moves this hour upon the lake
  In adoration to the east.
Here is the bride a god may know,
  The primal will, the young consent,
Till surely upon the appointed mood
  Intent
    The god shall leap—and lo,

Over the lake's end strikes the sun—
  White flameless fire; some purity
Thrilling the mist, a splendor won
  Out of the world's heart. Let there be
Thoughts, and atonements, and desires;
  Proud limbs, and undeliberate tongue;
Where now we move with mortal care
  Among
    Immortal dews and fires.

So the old mating goes apace,
  Wind with the sea, and blood with thought,
Lover with lover; and the grace
  Of understanding comes unsought
When stars into the twilight steer,
  Or thrushes build among the may,
Or wonder moves between the hills,
  And day
    Comes up on Rydal mere.

RECIPROCITY

I do not think that skies and meadows are
Moral, or that the fixture of a star
Comes of a quiet spirit, or that trees
Have wisdom in their windless silences.
Yet these are things invested in my mood
With constancy, and peace, and fortitude;
That in my troubled season I can cry
Upon the wide composure of the sky,
And envy fields, and wish that I might be
As little daunted as a star or tree.

INVOCATION

As pools beneath stone arches take
  Darkly within their deeps again
Shapes of the flowing stone, and make
  Stories anew of passing men,

So let the living thoughts that keep,
  Morning and evening, in their kind,
Eternal change in height and deep,
  Be mirrored in my happy mind.

Beat, world, upon this heart, be loud
  Your marvel chanted in my blood.
Come forth, O sun, through cloud on cloud
  To shine upon my stubborn mood.

Great hills that fold above the sea,
  Ecstatic airs and sparkling skies,
Sing out your words to master me—
  Make me immoderately wise.

Louise Driscoll

THE METAL CHECKS

[*The scene is a bare room, with two shaded windows at the back, and a fireplace between them with a fire burning low. The room contains a few plain chairs, and a rough wooden table on which are piled many small wooden trays.* THE COUNTER, *who is Death, sits at the table. He wears a loose gray robe, and his face is partly concealed by a gray veil.* THE BEARER *is the World, that bears the burden of War. He wears a soiled robe of brown and green and he carries on his back a gunny-bag filled with the little metal disks that have been used for the identification of the slain common soldiers.*]

The Bearer

Here is a sack, a gunny sack,
A heavy sack I bring.
Here is toll of many a soul—
But not the soul of a king.

This is the toll of common men,
Who lived in the common way;
Lived upon bread and wine and love,
In the light of the common day.

This is the toll of working men,
Blood and brawn and brain.
Who shall render us again
The worth of all the slain?

The Counter

Pour them out on the table here.
C l i c k e t y—c l i c k e t y—c l a c k !
For every button a man went out,
And who shall call him back?
C l i c k e t y—c l i c k e t y—c l a c k !

One—two—three—four—
Every disk a soul!
Three score—four score—
So many boys went out to war.
Pick up that one that fell on the floor—
Didn't you see it roll?
That was a man a month ago.
This was a man. Row upon row—
Pile them in tens and count them so.

The Bearer

I have an empty sack.
It is not large. Would you have said
That I could carry on my back
So great an army—and all dead?

[*As* The Counter *speaks* The Bearer *lays the sack over his arm and helps count.*]

The Counter

Put a hundred in each tray—
We can tally them best that way.
Careful—do you understand
You have ten men in your hand?
There's another fallen—there—
Under that chair.

[The Bearer *finds it and restores it.*]

That was a man a month ago;
He could see and feel and know.
Then, into his throat there sped
A bit of lead.
Blood was salt in his mouth; he fell
And lay amid the battle wreck.
Nothing was left but this metal check—
And a wife and child, perhaps.

[The Bearer *finds the bag on his arm troublesome. He holds it up, inspecting it.*]

The Bearer

What can one do with a thing like this?
Neither of life nor death it is!
For the dead serve not, though it served the dead.
The wounds it carried were wide and red,
Yet they stained it not. Can a man put food,
Potatoes or wheat, or even wood
That is kind and burns with a flame to warm
Living men who are comforted—
In a thing that has served so many dead?
There is no thrift in a graveyard dress,
It's been shroud for too many men.
I'll burn it and let the dead bless.

[*He crosses himself and throws it into the fire. He watches it burn.* The Counter *continues to pile up the metal checks, and drop them by hundreds into the trays which he piles one upon another.* The Bearer *turns from the fire and speaks more slowly than before. He indicates the metal checks.*]

Would not the blood of these make a great sea
For men to sail their ships on? It may be
No fish would swim in it, and the foul smell
Would make the sailors sick. Perhaps in Hell
There's some such lake for men who rush to war
Prating of glory, and upon the shore
Will stand the wives and children and old men
Bereft, to drive them back again
When they seek haven. Some such thing
I thought the while I bore it on my back
And heard the metal pieces clattering.

The Counter

Four score—five score—
These and as many more.
Forward—march!—into the tray!
No bugles blow today,
No captains lead the way;
But mothers and wives,

Fathers, sisters, little sons,
Count the cost
Of the lost;
And we count the unlived lives,
The forever unborn ones
Who might have been your sons.

The Bearer

Could not the hands of these rebuild
That which has been destroyed?
Oh, the poor hands! that once were strong and filled
With implements of labor whereby they
Served home and country through the peaceful day.
When those who made the war stand face to face
With these slain soldiers in that unknown place
Whither the dead go, what will be the word
By dead lips spoken and by dead ears heard?
Will souls say King or Kaiser? Will souls prate
Of earthly glory in that new estate?

The Counter

One hundred thousand—
One hundred and fifty thousand—
Two hundred—

The Bearer

Can this check plough?
  Can it sow? can it reap?
Can we arouse it?
  Is it asleep?

Can it hear when a child cries?—
  Comfort a wife?
This little metal disk
  Stands for a life.

Can this check build,
  Laying stone upon stone?
Once it was warm flesh
  Folded on bone.

Sinew and muscle firm,
Look at it—can
This little metal check
Stand for a man?

The Counter
One—two—three—four—

Dorothy Dudley

LA RUE DE LA MONTAGNE SAINTE-GÈNEVIÈVE

I have seen an old street weeping—
Narrow, dark, ascending;
Water o'er the spires
Of a church descending;
The church thrice veiled—in rain,
In the shadow of the years,
In the grace of old design;
Dim dwellings, blind with tears,
Rotting either side
The winding passage way,
To where the river crosses
Weeping, under gray
And limpid heavens weeping.
Gardens I have seen
Through archèd doors, whose gratings
Ever cry the keen
Dim melodies of lace
Long used and rare, gardens
With an old-time grace
Vibrating, dimly trembling
In the music of the rain.
Roses I have seen drip a faint
Perfume, and lilacs train
A quivering loveliness
From door to archèd door,
Passing by in flower carts;

While waters ever pour
O'er the white stones of the fountain,
Melting icily away
Half way up the mountain;
Where to mingle tears with tears,
Their clothes misshapen, sobbing,
Two or three old women,
In wooden sabots hobbling,
Meet to fill their pitchers,
From the stream of water leaping
Through the lips, a long time parted,
Of a face grotesquely weeping—
A carven face forever weeping.

Helen Dudley

TO ONE UNKNOWN

I have seen the proudest stars
  That wander on through space,
Even the sun and moon,
  But not your face.

I have heard the violin,
  The winds and waves rejoice
In endless minstrelsy,
  Yet not your voice.

I have touched the trillium,
  Pale flower of the land,
Coral, anemone,
  And not your hand.

I have kissed the shining feet
  Of Twilight lover-wise,
Opened the gates of Dawn—
  Oh, not your eyes!

I have dreamed unwonted things,
  Visions that witches brew,
Spoken with images,
  Never with you.

SONG

A few more windy days
Must come and go their ways,
And we will walk
My love and I
Beneath the amber-dripping boughs.
Then on the stars we'll tread,
On purple stars and red,
And wonder why
The while we talk
Men sing so much of broken vows.

Max Eastman

DIOGENES

  A hut, and a tree,
  And a hill for me,
And a piece of a weedy meadow.
  I'll ask no thing,
  Of God or king,
But to clear away his shadow.

IN MARCH

On a soaked fence-post a little blue-backed bird,
Opening her sweet throat, has stirred
A million music-ripples in the air
That curl and circle everywhere.
They break not shallow at my ear,
But quiver far within. Warm days are near!

AT THE AQUARIUM

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As through the aged deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion!
They have no pathway where they go,
They flow like water to and fro.
They watch with never winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there:
Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

T. S. Eliot

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—
With "I have saved this afternoon for you";
And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead:
An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.

We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.
"So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
Should be resurrected only among friends—
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room."

And so the conversation slips
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets,
Through attenuated tones of violins
Mingled with remote cornets,
And begins:
"You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends;
And how, how rare and strange it is, to find,
In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends—
(For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? you are not blind!
How keen you are!)
To find a friend who has these qualities,
Who has, and gives
Those qualities upon which friendship lives:
How much it means that I say this to you—
Without these friendships—life, what *cauchemar!*"

Among the windings of the violins,
And the ariettes
Of cracked cornets,
Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own—
Capricious monotone
That is at least one definite "false note."
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
Admire the monuments,
Discuss the late events,
Correct our watches by the public clocks;
Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks.

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
And twists one in her fingers while she talks.
"Ah my friend, you do not know, you do not know
What life is, you who hold it in your hands—"
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks);
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse,
And smiles at situations which it cannot see."

I smile, of course,
And go on drinking tea.
"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall
My buried life, and Paris in the spring,
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:
"I am always sure that you understand
My feelings, always sure that you feel,
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.

"You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
You will go on, and when you have prevailed
You can say: 'At this point many a one has failed.'
But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
To give you, what can you receive from me?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end.

"I shall sit here, serving tea to friends . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
For what she has said to me?

You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and the sporting page.
Particularly I remark
An English countess goes upon the stage,
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
Another bank defaulter has confessed.
I keep my countenance,
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired,
Reiterates some worn-out common song,
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
Recalling things that other people have desired.
Are these ideas right or wrong?

III

The October night comes down. Returning as before,
Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease,
I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door
And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?
But that's a useless question.
You hardly know when you are coming back,
You will find so much to learn."
My smile falls heavily among the bric-a-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."
My self-possession flares up for a second;
This is as I had reckoned.
"I have been wondering frequently of late
(But our beginnings never know our ends!)
Why we have not developed into friends."
I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark
Suddenly, his expression in a glass.
My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,
They all were sure our feelings would relate
So closely! I myself can hardly understand.
We must leave it now to fate.
You will write, at any rate.
Perhaps it is not too late.
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression . . . dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance . . .

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
Afternoon gray and smoky, evening yellow and rose;

Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
With the smoke coming down above the house-tops;
Doubtful, for quite a while
Not knowing what to feel, or if I understand,
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon. . . .
Would she not have the advantage, after all?
This music is successful with a "dying fall"
Now that we talk of dying—
And should I have the right to smile?

LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—
Lean on a garden urn—
Weave, weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—
Fling them to the ground and turn
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,
So I would have had her stand and grieve,
So he would have left
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,
As the mind deserts the body it has used.
I should find
Some way incomparably light and deft,
Some way we both should understand,
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather
Compelled my imagination many days—
Many days and many hours:
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers—
And I wonder how they should have been together!
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees,
Letting his arms hang down to laugh;
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate.
Death and the Raven drift above,
And Sweeney guards the horned gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas.
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees;

Slips and pulls the table-cloth,
Overturns a coffee-cup.
Reorganized upon the floor,
She yawns and draws a stocking up.

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill, and gapes.
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas, figs and hot-house grapes.

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws.

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in.
Branches of wistaria
Circumscribe a golden grin.

The host with someone indistinct
Converse at the door apart.
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart;

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud;
And let their liquid droppings fall
To stain the stiff dishonored shroud.

WHISPERS OF IMMORTALITY

Webster was much possessed by death
And saw the skull beneath the skin;
And breastless creatures under ground
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.

Daffodil bulbs instead of balls
Stared from the sockets of the eyes!
He knew that thought clings round dead limbs
Tightening its lusts and luxuries.

Donne, I suppose, was such another
Who found no substitute for sense;
To seize and clutch and penetrate,
Expert beyond experience.

He knew the anguish of the marrow,
The ague of the skeleton;
No contact possible to flesh
Allayed the fever of the bone.

. . . . . .

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye
Is underlined for emphasis;
Uncorseted, her friendly bust
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

The couched Brazilian jaguar
Compels the scampering marmoset
With subtle effuence of cat:
Grishkin has a maisonette.

The sleek Brazilian jaguar
Does not, in its arboreal gloom,
Distil so rank a feline smell
As Grishkin in a drawing-room.

And even the Abstract Entities
Circumambulate her charm;
But our lot crawls between dry ribs
To keep our metaphysics warm.

Donald Evans

IN THE VICES

Gay and audacious crime glints in his eyes;
And his mad talk, raping the commonplace,
Gleefully runs a devil-praising race,
And none can ever follow where he flies.
He streaks himself with vices tenderly;
He cradles sin, and with a figleaf fan
Taps his green cat, watching a bored sun span
The wasted minutes to eternity.

Once I took up his trail along the dark,
Wishful to track him to the witches' flame,
To see the bubbling of the sneer and snare.
The way led through a fragrant starlit park,
And soon upon a harlot's house I came—
Within I found him playing at solitaire!

EN MONOCLE

Born with a monocle he stares at life,
And sends his soul on pensive promenades;
He pays a high price for discarded gods,
And then regilds then to renew their strife.
His calm moustache points to the ironies,
And a faun-colored laugh sucks in the night,
Full of the riant mists that turn to white
In brief lost battles with banalities.

Masters are makeshifts, and a path to tread
For blue pumps that are ardent for the air;
Features are fixtures when the face is fled,
And we are left the husks of tarnished hair;
But he is one who lusts uncomforted
To kiss the naked phrase quite unaware.

IN THE GENTLEMANLY INTEREST

Piccadilly

He polished snubs till they were regnant art,
Curling their shameless toilets round the hour.
Each lay upon his lips an exquisite flower
Subtly malign and poisoned for its part.
The path of victims was no wanton plan—
He had bowed his head in sorrow at his birth,
For he had said long ere he came to earth
That it was no place for a gentleman.

But always a heart-scald lurked behind the screen,
And somehow he missed the ultimate degrees.
He saw a beggar at the daylight's fall,
And then he rose and robed him for the scene;
And when they called him cad he found release—
He knew he had used the finest snub of all.

EPICEDE

Wistfully shimmering, shamelessly wise and weak,
He lives in pawn, pledging a battered name;
He loves his failures as one might love fame,
And listens for the ghost years as they speak.

A fragrance bright and broken clasps his head,
And wildwood airs sing a frayed interlude;
While cloaked he comes in a new attitude
To play gravedigger, if the word be said.

He swore he would be glad and only glad,
And turned to Broadway for the peace of God.
He found it at the bottom of the glass;
For where the dregs lay it was less than sad,
And 'mid the murmur when the dance was trod
He heard the echo of a genius pass.

Arthur Davison Ficke

MEETING

Gray-robed Wanderer in sleep . . . Wanderer . . .
You also move among
Those silent halls
Dim on the shore of the unsailèd deep?
And your footfalls, yours also, Wanderer,
Faint through those twilight corridors have rung?

Of late my eyes have seen . . . Wanderer . . .
Amid the shadows' gloom
Of that sleep-girdled place
I should have known such joy could not have been—
To see your face: and yet, Wanderer,
What hopes seem vain beneath the night in bloom?

Wearily I awake . . . Wanderer . . .
Your look of old despair,
Like a dying star,
In morning vanishes. But for all memories' sake,
Though you are far—tonight, O wanderer,
Tonight come, though in silence, to the shadows there . . .

AMONG SHADOWS

In halls of sleep you wandered by,
This time so indistinguishably
I cannot remember aught of it,
Save that I know last night we met.
I know it by the cloudy thrill
That in my heart is quivering still;
And sense of loveliness forgot
Teases my fancy out of thought.
Though with the night the vision wanes,
Its haunting presence still may last—
As odor of flowers faint remains
In halls where late a queen has passed.

THE THREE SISTERS

Gone are the three, those sisters rare
With wonder-lips and eyes ashine.
One was wise and one was fair,
And one was mine.

Ye mourners, weave for the sleeping hair
Of only two your ivy vine.
For one was wise and one was fair,
But one was mine.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN

She limps with halting painful pace,
  Stops, wavers, and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face
  Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
  Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand like bundled cornstalks holds
  The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
  A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
  Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured . . .
  She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
  From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
  Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
  Abandoned to the final night.

I AM WEARY OF BEING BITTER

I am weary of being bitter and weary of being wise,
  And the armor and the mask of these fall from me, after long.
I would go where the islands sleep, or where the sea-dawns rise,
  And lose my bitter wisdom in the wisdom of a song.

There are magics in melodies, unknown of the sages;
  The powers of purest wonder on fragile wings go by.
Doubtless out of the silence of dumb preceding ages
  Song woke the chaos-world—and light swept the sky.

All that we know is idle; idle is all we cherish;
Idle the will that takes loads that proclaim it strong.
For the knowledge, the strength, the burden—all shall perish:
One thing only endures, one thing only—song.

FROM "SONNETS OF A PORTRAIT PAINTER"

I am in love with high far-seeing places
That look on plains half-sunlight and half-storm,
In love with hours when from the circling faces
Veils pass, and laughing fellowship glows warm.
You who look on me with grave eyes where rapture
And April love of living burn confessed—
The Gods are good! the world lies free to capture!
Life has no walls. Oh, take me to your breast!
Take me—be with me for a moment's span!
I am in love with all unveilèd faces.
I seek the wonder at the heart of man;
I would go up to the far-seeing places.
While youth is ours, turn toward me for a space
The marvel of your rapture-lighted face!

There are strange shadows fostered of the moon,
More numerous than the clear-cut shade of day. . . .
Go forth, when all the leaves whisper of June,
Into the dusk of swooping bats at play;
Or go into that late November dusk
When hills take on the noble lines of death,
And on the air the faint astringent musk
Of rotting leaves pours vaguely troubling breath.
Then shall you see shadows whereof the sun
Knows nothing—aye, a thousand shadows there
Shall leap and flicker and stir and stay and run,
Like petrels of the changing foul or fair;
Like ghosts of twilight, of the moon, of him
Whose homeland lies past each horizon's rim. . . .

LIKE HIM WHOSE SPIRIT

Like him whose spirit in the blaze of noon
Still keeps the memory of one secret star
That in the dusk of a remembered June
Thrilled the strange hour with beauty from afar—
And perilous spells of twilight snare his heart,
And wistful moods his common thoughts subdue,
And life seethes by him utterly apart—
Last night I dreamed, today I dream, of you.
Gleams downward strike; bright bubbles upward hover
Through the charmed air; far sea-winds cool my brow.
Invisible lips tell me I shall discover
Today a temple, a mystery, a vow . . .
The cycle rounds: only the false seems true.
Last night I dreamed, today I dream, of you.

THREE SONNETS

PERSPECTIVE OF CO-ORDINATION

The circles never fully round, but change
In spiral gropings—not, as on a wall,
Flat-patterned, but back into space they fall,
In depth on depth of indeterminate range.
Where they begin may be here at my hand
Or there far lost beyond the search of eye;
And though I sit, desperately rapt, and try
To trace round-round the line, and understand
The sequence, the relation, the black-art
Of their continuance, hoping to find good
At least some logic of part-joined-to-part,
I judge the task one of too mad a mood:
And prophecy throws its shadow on my heart,
And Time's last sunset flames along my blood.

WORLD BEYOND WORLD

Two mirrors, face to face, is all I need
To build a mazy universe for my mind
Where world grows out of world. I dizzily find
Solace in endless planes that there recede.
The fifth plane-world, soft-shimmering through the glass—
Surely it has a light more bland than ours.
And in the far ninth hides a whirl of powers
Unknown to our dull senses. I would pass
Down the long vista, pausing now and then
To taste the flavor of each separate sphere,
And with each vast perspective cool my eye.
Whom should I meet there? Never living men!
What should I love there? Nothing I hold dear!
What would the end be? Endless as am I!

LEAF-MOVEMENT

From its thin branch high in the autumn wind
The yellow leaf now sails in upward flight;
Hovers at top-slope; then, a whirling bright
Eddy of motion, sinks. The storm behind
With gusts and veering tyrannies would uphold
Even as it downward beats this gorgeous thing
Which like an angel's lost and shattered wing
Against the grey sky sweeps its broken gold.
Another eddy, desperate or in mirth,
Brings it to rest here on the crackled earth
Where men can see it better than on the bough.
What quite preposterous irony of wind's-will
Touches it where it lies, golden and still,
And once more lifts it vainly heavenward now!

Hildegarde Flanner

THIS MORNING

After the emotion of rain
The mist parts across the morning
Like the smile of one
Who has laughed in sleep
And cannot remember why.

The damp road companions my feet
And is a friend to every step.
Above me winter goldfinches
Cling like fruit
To the delighted birch-trees;
And the studious earth,
Thinking what flowers to speak in next,
Moves restlessly with small wise birds,
Who read the tucks in the moss,
The symbols on the beetle-wings,
And the comedies on pink and yellow pebbles
Which I am too tall to see.

DISCOVERY

Until my lamp and I
Stood close together by the glass,
I had not ever noticed
I was a comely lass.

My aunts have always nodded,
"Sweet child,
She has a gentle soul
And mild."

And so, one night,
I took my lamp and said
"I'll look upon my gentle soul
Before I go to bed."

I could not find it; no,
But gazing hard I spied
Something much more near to me,
White-armed and amber-eyed.

And as I looked I seemed to feel
Warm hands upon my breast,
Where never any hands but mine
Were known to rest.

And as I looked my startled thoughts
Winged up in happy flight,
And circled like mad butterflies
About the light.

I went to bed without my soul,
And I had no mind to care,
For a joyful little sin
Slept pillowed on my hair.

I went to bed without my soul—
What difference to me?—
I had a joyful little sin
For company.

And that is what came of listening
To aunts who always lied.
They never told me that I was
White-armed and amber-eyed.

BIRDS

Beloved, the black swans of my eyes
Are loosed to your behest,
And must I still keep caged from you
The white swans of my breast?

My hands, like slender pigeons,
Flutter the whole day through.

Did you not know the little things
Home unto you?

My lips, like slim canaries,
Sing when I hear you speak.
Beloved, bend and stroke once more
The finches of my cheek.

COMMUNION

I have spoken with the dead;
From the silence of my bed
I have heard them in the night.
Their voices are as white
As altar candles. Their voices are as gold as wheat,
And clustered in the dark their words are sweet
As ripened fruit. Their voices are the color of dim rain
Over grass where spring has lain.
Their speaking is an orchard of delight.
I have heard them in the night;
Their lips bloomed into heavy song
That hung like bells above me. You are wrong
Who say the dead lie still:
I heard them sing until
The cup of silence fell in two and lay
Broken by beauty of what dead men say.

There is no loveliness I cannot see.
There is no wall too stern for me.
There is no door that can withstand
The lifted symbol of my hand.

I know an ancient shibboleth:
I pass, for I have talked with Death!

John Gould Fletcher

IRRADIATIONS

I

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds:
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Whirlpools of purple and gold,
Winds from the mountains of cinnabar,
Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and balancing
Amid the vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades;
Glint of the glittering winds of dragon-flies in the light;
Silver filaments, golden flakes settling downwards;
Rippling, quivering flutters; repulse and surrender,
The sun broidered upon the rain,
The rain rustling with the sun.

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds:
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

II

O seeded grass, you army of little men
Crawling up the long slope with quivering quick blades of steel:
You who storm millions of graves, tiny green tentacles of Earth,
Interlace yourselves tightly over my heart
And do not let me go:
For I would lie here for ever and watch with one eye
The pilgrimaging ants in your dull savage jungles,
While with the other I see the stiff lines of the slope
Break in mid-air, a wave surprisingly arrested;
And above them, wavering, dancing, bodiless, colorless, unreal,
The long thin lazy fingers of the heat.

III

Not noisily, but solemnly and pale,
In a meditative ectasy, you entered life,
As performing some strange rite, to which you alone held the clue.

Child, life did not give rude strength to you;
From the beginning you would seem to have thrown away,
As something cold and cumbersome, that armor men use against death.
You would perhaps look on him face to face and so learn the secret
Whether that face wears oftenest a smile or no.
Strange, old and silent being, there is something
Infinitely vast in your intense tininess:
I think you could point out with a smile some curious star
Far off in the heavens, which no man has seen before.

IV

The morning is clean and blue, and the wind blows up the clouds:
Now my thoughts, gathered from afar,
Once again in their patched armor, with rusty plumes and blunted swords,
Move out to war.

Smoking our morning pipes we shall ride two and two
Through the woods.
For our old cause keeps us together,
And our hatred is so precious not death or defeat can break it.

God willing, we shall this day meet that old enemy
Who has given us so many a good beating.
Thank God, we have a cause worth fighting for,
And a cause worth losing, and a good song to sing!

ARIZONA POEMS

MEXICAN QUARTER

By an alley lined with tumble-down shacks,
And street-lamps askew, half-sputtering,
Feebly glimmering on gutters choked with filth, and dogs
Scratching their mangy backs:
Half-naked children are running about,
Women puff cigarettes in black doorways,

Crickets are crying;
Men slouch sullenly
Into the shadows.
Behind a hedge of cactus,
The smell of a dead horse
Mingles with the smell of tamales frying.

And a girl in a black lace shawl
Sits in a rickety chair by the square of unglazed window,
And sees the explosion of the stars
Fiercely poised on the velvet sky.
And she seems humming to herself:
"Stars, if I could reach you
(You are so very clear that it seems as if I could reach you),
I would give you all to the Madonna's image
On the gray plastered altar behind the paper flowers,
So that Juan would come back to me,
And we could live again those lazy burning hours,
Forgetting the tap of my fan and my sharp words.
And I would only keep four of you—
Those two blue-white ones overhead
To put in my ears,
And those two orange ones yonder
To fasten on my shoe-buckles."

A little further along the street
A man squats stringing a brown guitar.
The smoke of his cigarette curls round his hair,
And he too is humming, but other words:
"Think not that at your window I wait.
New love is better, the old is turned to hate.
Fate! Fate! All things pass away;
Life is forever, youth is but for a day.
Love again if you may,
Before the golden moons are blown out of the sky
And the crickets die.
Babylon and Samarkand
Are mud walls in a waste of sand."

RAIN IN THE DESERT

The huge red-buttressed mesa over yonder
Is merely a far-off temple where the sleepy sun is burning
Its altar fires of pinyon and toyon for the day.

The old priests sleep, white-shrouded;
Their pottery whistles lie beside them, the prayer-sticks closely feathered.
On every mummied face there glows a smile.

The sun is rolling slowly
Beneath the sluggish folds of the sky-serpents,
Coiling, uncoiling, blue-black, sparked with fires.

The old dead priests
Feel in the thin dried earth that is heaped about them,
Above the smell of scorching, oozing pinyon,
The acrid smell of rain.

And now the showers
Surround the mesa like a troop of silver dancers:
Shaking their rattles, stamping, chanting, roaring,
Whirling, extinguishing the last red wisp of light.

THE BLUE SYMPHONY

I

The darkness rolls upward.
The thick darkness carries with it
Rain and a ravel of cloud.
The sun comes forth upon earth.

Palely the dawn
Leaves me facing timidly

Old gardens sunken:
And in the gardens is water.

Sombre wreck—autumnal leaves;
Shadowy roofs
In the blue mist,
And a willow-branch that is broken.

O old pagodas of my soul, how you glittered across green trees!

Blue and cool:
Blue, tremulously,
Blow faint puffs of smoke
Across sombre pools.
The damp green smell of rotted wood;
And a heron that cries from out the water.

II

Through the upland meadows
I go alone.
For I dreamed of someone last night
Who is waiting for me.

Flower and blossom, tell me, do you know of her?

Have the rocks hidden her voice?
They are very blue and still.

Long upward road that is leading me,
Light-hearted I quit you,
For the long loose ripples of the meadow-grass
Invite me to dance upon them.

Quivering grass,
Daintily poised
For her foot's tripping.

O blown clouds, could I only race up like you!
Oh, the last slopes that are sun-drenched and steep!

Look, the sky!
Across black valleys
Rise blue-white aloft
Jagged unwrinkled mountains, ranges of death.

Solitude. Silence.

III

One chuckles by the brook for me:
One rages under the stone.
One makes a spout of his mouth,
One whispers—one is gone.

One over there on the water
Spreads cold ripples
For me
Enticingly.

The vast dark trees
Flow like blue veils
Of tears
Into the water.

Sour sprites,
Moaning and chuckling,
What have you hidden from me?

"In the palace of the blue stone she lies forever
Bound hand and foot."

Was it the wind
That rattled the reeds together?

Dry reeds,
A faint shiver in the grasses.

IV

On the left hand there is a temple:
And a palace on the right-hand side.

Foot-passengers in scarlet
Pass over the glittering tide.

Under the bridge
The old river flows
Low and monotonous
Day after day.

I have heard and have seen
All the news that has been:
Autumn's gold and Spring's green!

Now in my palace
I see foot-passengers
Crossing the river,
Pilgrims of autumn
In the afternoons.

Lotus pools;
Petals in the water:
These are my dreams.

For me silks are outspread.
I take my ease, unthinking.

V

And now the lowest pine-branch
Is drawn across the disk of the sun.
Old friends who will forget me soon,
I must go on
Towards those blue death-mountains
I have forgot so long

In the march grasses
There lies forever
My last treasure,
With the hopes of my heart.

The ice is glazing over;
Torn lanterns flutter,
On the leaves is snow.

In the frosty evening
Toll the old bell for me
Once, in the sleepy temple.

Perhaps my soul will hear.

Afterglow:
Before the stars peep
I shall creep out into darkness.

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

EMBARKATION

Dull masses of dense green,
The forests range their sombre platforms.
Between them silently, like a spirit,
The river finds its own mysterious path.

Loosely the river sways out, backward, forward,
Always fretting the outer side;
Shunning the invisible focus of each crescent,
Seeking to spread into shining loops over fields:

Like an enormous serpent, dilating, uncoiling,
Displaying a broad scaly back of earth-smeared gold;
Swaying out sinuously between the dull motionless forests,
As molten metal might glide down the lip of a vase of dark bronze.

HEAT

As if the sun had trodden down the sky,
Until no more it holds air for us, but only humid vapor,
The heat, pressing upon earth with irresistible languor,
Turns all the solid forest into half-liquid smudge.

The heavy clouds, like cargo-boats, strain slowly up 'gainst its current;
And the flickering of the heat haze is like the churning of ten thousand paddles

Against the heavy horizon, pale blue and utterly windless,
Whereon the sun hangs motionless, a brassy disk of flame.

FULL MOON

Flinging its arc of silver bubbles, quickly shifts the moon
From side to side of us as we go down its path;
I sit on the deck at midnight, and watch it slipping and sliding,
Under my tilted chair, like a thin film of spilt water.

It is weaving a river of light to take the place of this river—
A river where we shall drift all night, then come to rest in its shallows.
And then I shall wake from my drowsiness and look down from some dim tree-top
Over white lakes of cotton, like moon-fields on every side.

THE MOON'S ORCHESTRA

When the moon lights up
Its dull red camp-fire through the trees;
And floats out, like a white balloon,
Into the blue cup of the night, borne by a casual breeze;
The moon-orchestra then begins to stir:
Jiggle of fiddles commence their crazy dance in the darkness;
Crickets churr
Against the stark reiteration of the rusty flutes which frogs
Puff at from rotted logs
In the swamp.
And the moon begins her dance of frozen pomp
Over the lightly quivering floor of the flat and mournful river.
Her white feet slightly twist and swirl—
She is a mad girl
In an old unlit ball-room,
Whose walls, half-guessed-at through the gloom,
Are hung with the rusty crape of stark black cypresses,
Which show, through gaps and tatters, red stains half hidden away.

THE STEVEDORES

Frieze of warm bronze that glides with cat-like movements
Over the gang-plank poised and yet awaiting—
The sinewy thudding rhythms of forty shuffling feet
Falling like muffled drum-beats on the stillness:

Oh, roll the cotton down—
Roll, roll, the cotton down!
From the further side of Jordan,
Oh, roll the cotton down!

And the river waits,
The river listens,
Chuckling with little banjo-notes that break with a plop on the stillness.
And by the low dark shed that holds the heavy freights,
Two lonely cypress trees stand up and point with stiffened fingers
Far southward where a single chimney stands aloof in the sky.

NIGHT LANDING

After the whistle's roar has bellowed and shuddered,
Shaking the sleeping town and the somnolent river,
The deep-toned floating of the pilot's bell
Suddenly warns the engines.

They pause like heart-beats that abruptly stop:
The shore glides to us, in a wide low curve.

And then—supreme revelation of the river—
The tackle is loosed, the long gang-plank swings outwards;
And poised at the end of it, half naked beneath the search-light,
A blue-black negro with gleaming teeth waits for his chance to leap.

THE SILENCE

There is a silence which I carry about with me always—
A silence perpetual, for it is self-created;
A silence of heat, of water, of unchecked fruitfulness,
Through which each year the heavy harvests bloom, and burst, and fall.

Deep, matted green silence of my South,
Often, within the push and the scorn of great cities,
I have seen that mile-wide waste of water swaying out to you,
And on its current glimmering I am going to the sea.

There is a silence I have achieved—I have walked beyond its threshold.
I know it is without horizons, boundless, fathomless, perfect.
And some day maybe, far away,
I shall curl up in it at last and sleep an endless sleep.

F. S. Flint

LONDON

London, my beautiful,
It is not the sunset
Nor the pale green sky
Shimmering through the curtain
Of the silver birch,
Nor the quietness;
It is not the hopping
Of the little birds
Upon the lawn,
Nor the darkness
Stealing over all things
That moves me.

But as the moon creeps slowly
Over the tree-tops
Among the stars,
I think of her
And the glow her passing
Sheds on men.

London, my beautiful,
I will climb
Into the branches

To the moonlit tree-tops,
That my blood may be cooled
By the wind.

THE SWAN

Under the lily shadow
And the gold
And the blue and mauve
That the whin and the lilac
Pour down on the water,
The fishes quiver.

Over the green cold leaves
And the rippled silver
And the tarnished copper
Of its neck and beak,
Toward the deep black water
Beneath the arches,
The swan floats slowly.

Into the dark of the arch the swan floats
And the black depth of my sorrow
Bears a white rose of flame.

IN THE GARDEN

The grass is beneath my head;
And I gaze
At the thronging stars
In the aisles of night.

They fall . . . they fall. . . .
I am overwhelmed,
And afraid.

Each little leaf of the aspen
Is caressed by the wind,
And each is crying.

And the perfume
Of invisible roses
Deepens the anguish.

Let a strong mesh of roots
Feed the crimson of roses
Upon my heart;
And then fold over the hollow
Where all the pain was.

Moireen Fox

LIADAIN TO CURITHIR

Liadain and Curithir were two poets who lived in Ireland in the seventh century. They fell in love, but while Curithir was absent making preparations for their marriage, Liadain, for some unexplained reason, took the vows of a nun. Curithir in despair became a monk. At first they continued to see each other, but when this led to the breaking of their vows, Curithir left Liadain to spend his life in penance and thus save his soul.

I

If I had known how narrow a prison is love,
Never would I have given the width of the skies
In return for thy kiss, O Curithir, thou my grief!

If I had known love's poverty, I would have given
Duns and forests and ploughlands and begged my bread:
For now I have lost the earth and the stars and my soul.

If I had known the strength of love, I would have laid
The ridge of the world in ashes to stay his feet:
I would have cried on a stronger lord—on Death.

II

I, that was wont to pass by all unmoved
As the long ridge of the tide sweeps to the shore,
Am broken at last on the crags of a pitiless love.

I, who was wont to see men pale at my glance,
Like the quivering grass am shaken beneath thine eyes;
At thy touch my spirit is captive, my will is lost.

I would darken the sun and moon to break from thy love,
I would shatter the world to win thee again to my side.
O aching madness of love! Have the dead repose?
Or wilt thou tear my heart in the close-shut grave?

III

I have done with blame, I have risen from the cold earth
Where night and day my forehead has known the clay.
With faltering steps I have passed out to the sun.

Now in the sight of all I stand, that all may know
(For I myself will praise thee and prove their words)
How great was thy wisdom in turning away from me.

Who that has drunken wine will keep the lees?
Who that has slain a man will wait for revenge?
Who that has had his desire of a woman will stay?

Farewell, O Curithir, let thy soul be saved!
I have not found a thing that is dearer to thee.
In the eyes of God is it priceless? Who can say!

My soul is a thing of little worth unto God:
Of less worth unto thee, O Curithir, than my love.
And unto me so small I flung it beneath thy feet.

IV

If the dark earth hold a Power that is not God
I pray It to bind up memory lest I die.

There was a day when Curithir loved me, now it is gone.
It was I that sundered his love from me, I myself;
Or it was God who struck me with madness and mocked.

If the dark earth hold a Power that is not God
I pray It to hide me for ever away from His face.

V

All things are outworn now—grief is dead,
And passion has fallen from me like a withered leaf.
Little it were to me now though Curithir were beside me:
Though he should pass I would not turn my head.
My heart is like a stone in my body.
All I have grasped I loose again from my hands.

Florence Kiper Frank

THE JEWISH CONSCRIPT

In the Tzar's army

They have dressed me up in a soldier's dress,
With a rifle in my hand,
And have sent me bravely forth to shoot
My own in a foreign land.

Oh, many shall die for the fields of their homes,
And many in conquest wild;
But I shall die for the fatherland
That murdered my little child.

How many hundreds of years ago—
The nations wax and cease!—
Did the God of our fathers doom us to bear
The flaming message of peace!

We are the mock and the sport of time!
Yet why should I complain!—
For a Jew that they hung on the bloody cross,
He also died in vain.

THE MOVIES

She knows a cheap release
From worry and from pain—
The cowboys spur their horses
Over the unending plain.

The tenement rooms are small;
  Their walls press on the brain.
Oh, the dip of the galloping horses
  On the limitless, wind-swept plain!

YOU

I go my way complacently,
  As self-respecting persons should.
You are to me the rebel thought,
  You are the wayward rebel mood.

What shall we share who are separate?
  We part—as alien persons should.
But oh, I have need of the rebel thought,
  And a wicked urge to the rebel mood!

SLEEP THE MOTHER

Sleep, the mother,
Has taken her over.
She has slipped from my arms
Into the arms of this other,
Who has touched her softly,
Who has flushed her with dreaming.
This is not the same
Sleep who gathers men
Heavy with labor,
Women drugged with pleasure.
This is the mother
Of little children only,
Moving as a wind
From white spaces,
Flushing their faces
With a soft flame, holily;
To whom the mothers of the earth
Give up their children

Joyously, with a clean gladness,
With only a little sadness,
Such as hurts mothers
For their mortality.
For they remember also,
Remembering swiftly,
Death too is a mother!

But now her lashes curl delicately,
The blue veins of her eyelids
Show sweetly in the soft skin,
Her red mouth droops slowly. . . .

Hovering over
The child she is holding
Is Sleep, the white mother,
With arms enfolding!

Robert Frost

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go—
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.

And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side—it comes to little more.
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

AFTER APPLE-PICKING

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.

Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

MY NOVEMBER GUEST

My Sorrow, when she's here with me,
  Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be.
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
  She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
  She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
  Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate deserted trees,
  The faded earth, the heavy sky—
The beauties she so truly sees—
She thinks I have no eye for these,
  And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
  The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow;
But it were vain to tell her so,
  And they are better for her praise.

MOWING

There was never a sound beside the wood but one,
And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.
What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;
Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,
Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound—
And that was why it whispered and did not speak.
It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:
Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak

To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows—
Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers
(Pale orchises)—and scared a bright green snake.
The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.
My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

STORM FEAR

When the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lower chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,
"Come out! Come out!"—
It costs no inward struggle not to go,
Ah, no!
I count our strength,
Two and a child,
Those of us not asleep subdued to mark
How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length—
How drifts are piled,
Dooryard and road ungraded,
Till even the comforting barn grows far away;
And my heart owns a doubt
Whether 'tis in us to arise with day
And save ourselves unaided.

GOING FOR WATER

The well was dry beside the door,
  And so we went with pail and can
Across the fields behind the house
  To seek the brook if still it ran;

Not loth to have excuse to go,
  Because the autumn eve was fair
(Though chill) because the fields were ours,
  And by the brook our woods were there.

We ran as if to meet the moon
That slowly dawned behind the trees—
The barren boughs without the leaves,
Without the birds, without the breeze.

But once within the wood, we paused
Like gnomes that hid us from the moon,
Ready to run to hiding new
With laughter when she found us soon.

Each laid on other a staying hand
To listen ere we dared to look,
And in the hush we joined to make
We heard—we knew we heard—the brook.

A note as from a single place,
A slender tinkling fall that made
Now drops that floated on the pool
Like pearls, and now a silver blade.

THE CODE

There were three in the meadow by the brook,
Gathering up windrows, piling cocks of hay,
With an eye always lifted toward the west,
Where an irregular sun-bordered cloud
Darkly advanced with a perpetual dagger
Flickering across its bosom. Suddenly
One helper, thrusting pitchfork in the ground,
Marched himself off the field and home. One stayed.
The town-bred farmer failed to understand.

"What is there wrong?"
"Something you just now said."
"What did I say?"
"About our taking pains."

"To cock the hay?—because it's going to shower?
I said that nearly half an hour ago.
I said it to myself as much as you."

"You didn't know. But James is one big fool.
He thought you meant to find fault with his work.
That's what the average farmer would have meant.
James would take time, of course, to chew it over
Before he acted; he's just got round to act."

"He *is* a fool if that's the way he takes me."

"Don't let it bother you. You've found out something.
The hand that knows his business won't be told
To do work faster or better—those two things.
I'm as particular as anyone:
Most likely I'd have served you just the same.
But I know you don't understand our ways.
You were just talking what was in your mind,
What was in all our minds, and you weren't hinting.
Tell you a story of what happened once.
I was up here in Salem, at a man's
Named Sanders, with a gang of four or five,
Doing the haying. No one liked the boss.
He was one of the kind sports call a spider,
All wiry arms and legs that spread out wavy
From a humped body nigh as big's a biscuit.
But work!—that man could work, especially
If by so doing he could get more work
Out of his hired help. I'm not denying
He was hard on himself: I couldn't find
That he kept any hours—not for himself.
Day-light and lantern-light were one to him:
I've heard him pounding in the barn all night.
But what he liked was someone to encourage;
Them that he couldn't lead he'd get behind
And drive, the way you can, you know, in mowing—
Keep at their heels and threaten to mow their legs off.
I'd seen about enough of his bulling tricks—
We call that bulling. I'd been watching him.
So when he paired off with me in the hayfield
To load the load, thinks I, look out for trouble!
I built the load and topped it off; old Sanders

Combed it down with the rake and says, 'O. K.'
Everything went well till we reached the barn
With a big catch to empty in a bay.
You understand that meant the easy job
For the man up on top of throwing down
The hay and rolling it off wholesale,
Where on a mow it would have been slow lifting.
You wouldn't think a fellow'd need much urging
Under these circumstances, would you now?
But the old fool seizes his fork in both hands,
And looking up bewhiskered out of the pit,
Shouts like an army captain, 'Let her come!'
Thinks I, d'ye mean it? 'What was that you said?'
I asked out loud, so's there'd be no mistake.
'Did you say, let her come?' 'Yes, let her come.'
He said it over, but he said it softer.
Never you say a thing like that to a man,
Not if he values what he is. God, I'd as soon
Murdered him as left out his middle name.
I'd built the load and knew just where to find it.
Two or three forkfuls I picked lightly round for,
Like meditating, and then I just dug in
And dumped the rackful on him in ten lots.
I looked over the side once in the dust
And caught sight of him treading-water-like,
Keeping his head above. 'Damn ye,' I says,
'That gets ye!' He squeaked like a squeezed rat.

" That was the last I saw or heard of him.
I cleaned the rack and drove out to cool off.
As I sat mopping the hayseed from my neck,
And sort of waiting to be asked about it,
One of the boys sings out, 'Where's the old man?'
'I left him in the barn, under the hay.
If ye want him ye can go and dig him out.'
They realized, from the way I swobbed my neck
More than was needed, something must be up.
They headed for the barn—I stayed where I was.
They told me afterward: First they forked hay,

A lot of it, out into the barn floor.
Nothing! They listened for him. Not a rustle!
I guess they thought I'd spiked him in the temple
Before I buried him, or I couldn't have managed.
They excavated more. 'Go keep his wife
Out of the barn.'
" Some one looked in a window;
And curse me, if he wasn't in the kitchen,
Slumped way down in a chair, with both his feet
Stuck in the oven, the hottest day that summer.
He looked so clean disgusted from behind
There was no one that dared to stir him up
Or let him know that he was being looked at.
Apparently I hadn't buried him
(I may have knocked him down); but my just trying
To bury him had hurt his dignity.
He had gone to the house so's not to meet me.
He kept away from us all afternoon.
We tended to his hay. We saw him out
After a while picking peas in his garden:
He couldn't keep away from doing something."

"Weren't you relieved to find he wasn't dead?"

"No!—and yet I don't know—it's hard to say.
I went about to kill him fair enough."

"You took an awkward way. Did he discharge you?"

"Discharge me? No! He knew I did just right."

A HILLSIDE THAW

To think to know the country, and not know
The hillside on the day the sun lets go
Ten million silver lizards out of snow.
As often as I've seen it done before,
I can't pretend to tell the way it's done.

It looks as if some magic of the sun
Lifted the rug that bred them on the floor,
And the light breaking on them made them run.
But if I thought to stop the wet stampede,
And caught one silver lizard by the tail,
And put my foot on one without avail,
And threw myself wet-elbowed and wet-kneed
In front of twenty others' wriggling speed—
In the confusion of them all aglitter,
And birds that joined in the excited fun
By doubling and redoubling song and twitter—
I have no doubt I'd end by holding none.
It takes the moon for this. The sun's a wizard,
By all I tell; but so's the moon a witch.
From the high west she makes a gentle cast,
And suddenly, without a jerk or twitch,
She has her spell on every single lizard.
I fancied, when I looked at eight o'clock,
The swarm still ran and scuttled just as fast.
The moon was waiting for her chill effect.
I looked at ten: the swarm was turned to rock
In every life-like posture of the swarm,
Transfixed on mountain slopes almost erect;
Across each other and side by side they lay.
The spell that so could hold them as they were
Was wrought through trees without a breach of storm
To make a leaf, if there had been one, stir.
It was the moon's. She held them until day,
One lizard at the end of every ray.
The thought of my attempting such a stay!

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

All out-of-doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.

What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him—at a loss;
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off; and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches—common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what;
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon—
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge—his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing; but still slept.
One aged man—one man—can't fill a house,
A farm, a countryside; or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

FIRE AND ICE

Some say the world will end in fire;
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

THE AIM WAS SONG

Before man came to blow it right
  The wind once blew itself untaught,
And did its loudest day and night
  In any rough place where it caught.

Man came to tell it what was wrong:
  It hadn't found the place to blow;
It blew too hard—the aim was song.
  And listen—how it ought to go!

He took a little in his mouth,
  And held it long enough for north
To be converted into south,
  And then by measure blew it forth.

By measure. It was word and note,
  The wind the wind had meant to be—
A little through the lips and throat.
  The aim was song—the wind could see.

THE HILL WIFE

LONELINESS

Her Word

One ought not to have to care
  So much as you and I
Care when the birds come round the house
  To seem to say good-bye;

Or care so much when they come back
  With whatever it is they sing;
The truth being we are as much
  Too glad for the one thing

As we are too sad for the other here—
With birds that fill their breasts
But with each other and themselves,
And their built or driven nests.

HOUSE FEAR

Always—I tell you this they learned—
Always at night when they returned
To the lonely house from far away
To lamps unlighted and fire gone gray,
They learned to rattle the lock and key
To give whatever might chance to be
Warning and time to be off in flight:
And preferring the out- to the in-door night,
They learned to leave the house-door wide
Until they had lit the lamp inside.

THE SMILE

Her Word

I didn't like the way he went away.
That smile!—it never came of being gay.
Still he smiled—did you see him?—I was sure!
Perhaps because we gave him only bread
And the wretch knew from that that we were poor.
Perhaps because he let us give instead
Of seizing from us as he might have seized.
Perhaps he mocked at us for being wed,
Or being very young (and he was pleased
To have a vision of us old and dead).
I wonder how far down the road he's got.
He's watching from the woods as like as not.

THE OFT-REPEATED DREAM

She had no saying dark enough
For the dark pine that kept
Forever trying the window-latch
Of the room where they slept.

The tireless but ineffectual hands
That with every futile pass
Made the great tree seem as a little bird
Before the mystery of glass!

It never had been inside the room,
And only one of the two
Was afraid in an oft-repeated dream
Of what the tree might do.

THE IMPULSE

It was too lonely for her there,
And too wild;
And since there were but two of them
And no child,

And work was little in the house,
She was free,
And followed where he furrowed field,
Or felled tree.

She rested on a log and tossed
The fresh chips,
With a song only to herself
On her lips.

And once she went to break a bough
Of black alder.
She strayed so far she scarcely heard
When he called her—

And didn't answer—didn't speak—
Or return.
She stood, and then she ran and hid
In the fern.

He never found her, though he looked
Everywhere,
And he asked at her mother's house
Was she there.

Sudden and swift and light as that—
The ties gave,
And he learned of finalities
Besides the grave.

Hamlin Garland

TO A CAPTIVE CRANE

Ho, brother! Art thou prisoned too?
Is thy heart hot with restless pain?
I heard the call thy bugle blew
Here by the bleak and chilling main
(Whilst round me shaven parks are spread
And cindered drives wind on and on);
And at thy cry, thy lifted head,
My gladdened heart was westward drawn.

O splendid bird! your trumpet brings
To my lone heart the prairie springs.

THE MOUNTAINS ARE A LONELY FOLK

The mountains they are silent folk,
They stand afar—alone;
And the clouds that kiss their brows at night
Hear neither sigh nor groan.
Each bears him in his ordered place
As soldiers do, and bold and high
They fold their forests round their feet
And bolster up the sky.

MAGIC

Within my hand I hold
A piece of lichen-spotted stone,
Each fleck red-gold;

And with closed eyes I hear the moan
Of solemn winds round naked crags
Of Colorado's mountains. The snow
Lies deep about me. Gray and old
Hags of cedars, gaunt and bare,
With streaming, tangled hair,
Snarl endlessly. White-winged and proud,
With stately step and queenly air,
A glittering, cool and silent cloud
Upon me sails.
The wind wails,
And from the canyon stern and steep
I hear the furious waters leap.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

COLOR

A blue-black Nubian plucking oranges
At Jaffa by a sea of malachite,
In red tarboosh, green sash, and flowing white
Burnous—among the shadowy memories
That haunt me yet by these bleak northern seas
He lives for ever in my eyes' delight,
Bizarre, superb in young immortal might—
A god of old barbaric mysteries.

Maybe he lived a life of lies and lust,
Maybe his bones are now but scattered dust;
Yet, for a moment he was life supreme
Exultant and unchallenged: and my rhyme
Would set him safely out of reach of time
In that old heaven where things are what they seem.

OBLIVION

Near the great pyramid, unshadowed, white,
With apex piercing the white noon-day blaze,

Swathed in white robes beneath the blinding rays,
Lie sleeping Bedouins drenched in white-hot light.
About them, searing to the tingling sight,
Swims the white dazzle of the desert ways
Where the sense shudders, witless and adaze,
In a white void with neither depth nor height.

Within the black core of the pyramid,
Beneath the weight of sunless centuries,
Lapt in dead night King Cheops lies asleep:
Yet, in the darkness of his chamber hid,
He knows no black oblivion more deep
Than the blind white oblivion of noon skies.

TENANTS

Suddenly, out of dark and leafy ways,
We came upon the little house asleep
In cold blind stillness, shadowless and deep,
In the white magic of the full moon-blaze:
Strangers without the gate, we stood agaze,
Fearful to break that quiet, and to creep
Into the house that had been ours to keep
Through a long year of happy nights and days.

So unfamiliar in the white moon-gleam,
So old and ghostly like a house of dream
It seemed, that over us there stole the dread
That even as we watched it, side by side,
The ghosts of lovers, who had lived and died
Within its walls, were sleeping in our bed.

GOLD

All day the mallet thudded, far below
My garret, in an old ramshackle shed
Where ceaselessly, with stiffly nodding head

And rigid motions, ever to and fro
A figure like a puppet in a show
Before the window moved till day was dead,
Beating out gold to earn his daily bread,
Beating out thin fine gold-leaf blow on blow.

And I within my garret all day long
Unto that ceaseless thudding tuned my song,
Beating out golden words in tune and time
To that dull thudding, rhyme on golden rhyme.
But in my dreams all night, in that dark shed,
With aching arms I beat fine gold for bread.

ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Against the green flame of the hawthorn-tree,
His scarlet tunic burns;
And livelier than the green sap's mantling glee
The spring fire tingles through him headily
As quivering he turns

And stammers out the old amazing tale
Of youth and April weather;
While she, with half-breathed jests that, sobbing, fail,
Sits, tight-lipped, quaking, eager-eyed and pale
Beneath her purple feather.

BATTLE

THE GOING

He's gone.
I do not understand.
I only know
That as he turned to go
And waved his hand,
In his young eyes a sudden glory shone:
And I was dazzled by a sunset glow,
And he was gone.

THE JOKE

He'd even have his joke
While we were sitting tight,
And so he needs must poke
His silly head in sight
To whisper some new jest
Chortling. But as he spoke
A rifle cracked . . .
And now God knows when I shall hear the rest!

IN THE AMBULANCE

"Two rows of cabbages,
Two of curly-greens,
Two rows of early peas,
Two of kidney-beans."

That's what he is muttering,
Making such a song,
Keeping other chaps awake,
The whole night long.

Both his legs are shot away,
And his head is light;
So he keeps on muttering
All the blessed night:

"Two rows of cabbages,
Two of curly-greens,
Two rows of early peas,
Two of kidney beans."

HIT

Out of the sparkling sea
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,
Basking, and watching lazily
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

My body seemed to burn
Salt in the sun that drenched it through and through,
Till every particle glowed clean and new
And slowly seemed to turn
To lucent amber in a world of blue . . .

I felt a sudden wrench—
A trickle of warm blood—
And found that I was sprawling in the mud
Among the dead men in the trench.

THE HOUSEWIFE

She must go back, she said,
Because she'd not had time to make the bed.
We'd hurried her away
So roughly . . . and for all that we could say,
She broke from us, and passed
Into the night, shells falling thick and fast.

HILL-BORN

I sometimes wonder if it's really true
I ever knew
Another life
Than this unending strife
With unseen enemies in lowland mud;
And wonder if my blood
Thrilled ever to the tune
Of clean winds blowing through an April noon
Mile after sunny mile
On the green ridges of the Windy Gile.

THE FEAR

I do not fear to die
'Neath the open sky,
To meet death in the fight
Face to face, upright.

But when at last we creep
Into a hole to sleep,

I tremble, cold with dread,
Lest I wake up dead.

BACK

They ask me where I've been,
And what I've done and seen.
But what can I reply
Who know it wasn't I,
But someone, just like me,
Who went across the sea
And with my head and hands
Killed men in foreign lands . . .
Though I must bear the blame
Because he bore my name.

Richard Butler Glaenzer

STAR-MAGIC

Though your beauty be a flower
Of unimagined loveliness,
I cannot lure me tonight;
For I am all spirit.

As in the billowy oleander,
Full-bloomed,
Each blossom is all but lost
In the next—
One flame in a glow
Of green-veined rhodonite;
So is heaven a crystal magnificence
Of stars,
Powdered lightly with blue.

For this one night
My spirit has turned honey-moth,
And has made of the stars
Its flowers.

So all uncountable are the stars
That heaven shimmers as a web,
Bursting with light
From beyond,
A light exquisite,
Immeasurable!

For this one night
My spirit has dared, and been caught
In the web of the stars.
Though your beauty were a net
Of unimagined power,
It could not hold me tonight;
For I am all spirit.

Douglas Goldring

JOURNEYS

VENICE

To come so soon to this imagined dark—
More velvet-deep than any midnight park!
Palaces hem me in with blind black walls;
The water is hushed for a voice that never calls.

My gondolier sways silently over his oar.

IN FRANCE

À St. Blaise, à la Zuecca! Oh, my dear,
Laugh your gentle laughter! This old land,
From Provence to Paris—never fear—
All the heart can feel will understand.

A small town, a white town,
A town for you and me—
With a little café in the square,
And schooners at the quay;
And the *terrasse* of a small hotel
That looks upon the sea!

There gay sounds and sweet sounds
And sounds of peace come through:
The cook sings in the kitchen,
The late ring-doves coo,
And Julien brings the Pernods
That are bad for me and you.

À St. Blaise, à la Zuecca! Oh, my dear,
Laugh your gentle laughter! This old land,
From Provence to Paris—never fear—
All the heart can feel will understand.

IN PICARDY

Waves lap the beach, pines stretch to meet the sea;
A pale light on the horizon lingers and shines,
That might shine round the Graal; and we
Stand very silent, underneath the pines.

O swift expresses for the spirit's flight!
Sometimes the moon is like a maid I know,
Looking roguishly back, and flying forward—so
I follow, flashing after. Blessed night!

VOYAGES

Do you remember, have you been these ways,
Dreaming or waking, after sunny days;
Sailed, in a moment, to imagined lands—
With one to love you, holding both your hands—
To old hot countries where the warm grape clings,
And a soft musical language strikes the ear
Like a caress, most exquisite to hear—
Your soul the voyager and your heart her wings?

Hermann Hagedorn

EARLY MORNING AT BARGIS

Clear air and grassy lea,
  Stream-song and cattle-bell—
Dear man, what fools are we
  In prison-walls to dwell!

To live our days apart
  From green things and wide skies,
And let the wistful heart
  Be cut and crushed with lies!

Bright peaks!—And suddenly
  Light floods the placid dell,
The grass-tops brush my knee:
A good crop it will be,
  So all is well!
O man, what fools are we
  In prison-walls to dwell!

DOORS

Like a young child who to his mother's door
  Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
  And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel—so before
  A door that will not open, sick and numb,
  I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
  By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
    Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing—hark!—
  Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
    The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

DEPARTURE

My true love from her pillow rose
And wandered down the summer lane.
She left her house to the wind's carouse,
And her chamber wide to the rain.

She did not stop to don her coat,
She did not stop to smooth her bed—
But out she went in glad content
There where the bright path led.

She did not feel the beating storm,
But fled like a sunbeam, white and frail,
To the sea, to the air, somewhere, somewhere—
I have not found her trail.

BROADWAY

How like the stars are these white, nameless faces—
These far innumerable burning coals!
This pale procession out of stellar spaces,
This Milky Way of souls!
Each in its own bright nebulæ enfurled,
Each face, dear God, a world!

I fling my gaze out through the silent night:
In those far stars, what gardens, what high halls
Has mortal yearning built for its delight,
What chasms and what walls?
What quiet mansions where a soul may dwell?
What heaven and what hell?

Hazel Hall

TWO SEWING

The wind is sewing with needles of rain;
With shining needles of rain
It stitches into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in.
Oh, the wind has often sewed with me!—
One, two, three.

Spring must have fine things
To wear, like other springs.
Of silken green the grass must be
Embroidered. *One and two and three.*
Then every crocus must be made
So subtly as to seem afraid
Of lifting color from the ground;
And after crocuses the round
Heads of tulips, and all the fair
Intricate garb that Spring will wear.
The wind must sew with needles of rain,
With shining needles of rain
Stitching into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in—
For all the springs of futurity.
One, two, three.

INSTRUCTION

My hands that guide a needle
In their turn are led
Relentlessly and deftly,
As a needle leads a thread.

Other hands are teaching
My needle; when I sew
I feel the cool thin fingers
Of hands I do not know.

They urge my needle onward;
They smooth my seams, until
The worry of my stitches
Smothers in their skill.

All the tired women,
Who sewed their lives away,
Speak in my deft fingers
As I sew today.

MY NEEDLE SAYS

My needle says: Don't be young,
Holding visions in your eyes,
Tasting laughter on your tongue!
Be very old and very wise,
And sew a good seam up and down
In white cloth, red cloth, blue and brown.

My needle says: What is youth
But eyes drunken with the sun,
Seeing farther than the truth;
Lips that call, hands that shun
The many seams they have to do
In white cloth, red cloth, brown and blue!

ONE BY ONE

One by one, one by one,
Stitches of the hours run
Through the fine seams of the day;
Till like a garment it is done
And laid away.

One by one the days go by,
And suns climb up and down the sky;
One by one their seams are run—
As Time's untiring fingers ply,
And life is done.

Thomas Hardy

SHE HEARS THE STORM

There was a time in former years—
While my roof-tree was his—
When I should have been distressed by fears
At such a night as this.

I should have murmured anxiously,
"The pricking rain strikes cold;
His road is bare of hedge or tree,
And he is getting old."

But now the fitful chimney-roar,
The drone of Thorncombe trees,
The Froom in flood upon the moor,
The mud of Mellstock Leaze,

The candle slanting sooty wick'd,
The thuds upon the thatch,
The eaves-drops on the window flicked,
The clacking garden-hatch,

And what they mean to wayfarers,
I scarcely heed or mind;
He has won that storm-tight roof of hers
Which Earth grants all her kind.

THE VOICE

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,
  Saying that now you are not as you were
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
  But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you then,
  Standing as when I drew near to the town
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
  Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness
  Travelling across the wet mead to me here,
You being ever consigned to existlessness,
  Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,
  Leaves around me falling,
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward
  And the woman calling.

IN THE MOONLIGHT

"O lonely workman, standing there
In a dream, why do you stare and stare
At her grave, as no other grave there were?

"If your great gaunt eyes so importune
Her soul by the shine of this corpse-cold moon,
Maybe you'll raise her phantom soon!"

"Why, fool, it is what I would rather see
Than all the living folk there be;
But alas, there is no such joy for me!"

"Ah—she was one you loved, no doubt,
Through good and evil, through rain and drought,
And when she passed, all your sun went out?"

"Nay: she was the woman I did not love,
Whom all the others were ranked above,
Whom during her life I thought nothing of."

THE MAN HE KILLED

"Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like—just as I;
Was out of work, had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown."

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk,
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by;
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

THE TWO HOUSES

In the heart of night,
When farers were not near,
The left house said to the house on the right,
"I have marked your rise, O smart newcomer here!"

Said the right, cold-eyed:
"Newcomer here I am,
Hence haler than you with your cracked old hide,
Loose casements, wormy beams, and doors that jam.

"Modern my wood,
My hangings fair of hue;
While my windows open as they should
And water-pipes thread all my chambers through.

"Your gear is gray,
Your face wears furrows untold."
"Yours might," mourned the other, "if you held, brother,
The Presences from aforetime that I hold.

"You have not known
Men's lives, deaths, toils, and teens;
You are but a heap of stick and stone:
A new house has no sense of the have-beens.

"Void as a drum
You stand: I am packed with these;

Though, strangely, living dwellers who come
See not the phantoms all my substance sees!

"Visible in the morning
Stand they, when dawn crawls in;
Visible at night; yet hint or warning
Of these thin elbowers few of the inmates win.

"Babes new brought forth
Obsess my rooms; straight-stretched
Lank corpses, ere outborne to earth;
Yea, throng they as when first from the void upfetched!

"Dancers and singers
Throb in me now as once;
Rich-noted throats and gossamered flingers
Of heels; the learned in love-lore, and the dunce.

"Note here within
The bridegroom and the bride,
Who smile and greet their friends and kin,
And down my stairs depart for tracts untried.

"Where such inbe,
A dwelling's character
Takes theirs, and a vague semblancy
To them in all its limbs and light and atmosphere.

"Yet the blind folk,
My tenants, who come and go
In the flesh mid these, with souls unwoke,
Of such sylph-like surrounders do not know."

"—Will the day come,"
Said the new-built, awestruck, faint,
"When I shall lodge shades dim and dumb,
And with such spectral guests become acquaint?"

"—That will it, boy;
Such shades will people thee,
Each in his misery, irk, or joy,
And print on thee their presences as on me!"

DuBose Heyward

THE MOUNTAIN WOMAN

Among the sullen peaks she stood at bay
And paid life's hard account from her small store.
Knowing the code of mountain wives, she bore
The burden of the days without a sigh;
And, sharp against the somber winter sky,
I saw her drive her steers afield each day.

Hers was the hand that sunk the furrows deep
Across the rocky, grudging southern slope.
At first youth left her face, and later hope;
Yet through each mocking spring and barren fall,
She reared her lusty brood, and gave them all
That gladder wives and mothers love to keep.

And when the sheriff shot her eldest son
Beside his still, so well she knew her part,
She gave no healing tears to ease her heart;
But took the blow upstanding, with her eyes
As drear and bitter as the winter skies.
Seeing her then, I thought that she had won.

But yesterday her man returned too soon
And found her tending, with a reverent touch,
One scarlet bloom; and, having drunk too much,
He snatched its flame and quenched it in the dirt.
Then, like a creature with a mortal hurt,
She fell, and wept away the afternoon.

A YOKE OF STEERS

A heave of mighty shoulders to the yoke,
Square patient heads, and flaring sweep of horn;
The darkness swirling down beneath their feet
Where sleeping valleys stir and feel the dawn;
Uncouth and primal, on and up they sway,
Taking the summit in a drench of day.
The night-winds volley upward bitter-sweet,
And the dew shatters to a rainbow spray
Under the slow-moving cloven feet.

There is a power here that grips the mind—
A force repressed and inarticulate,
Slow as the swing of centuries, as blind
As Destiny, and as deliberate.

They will arrive in their appointed hour
Unhurried by the goad of lesser wills,
Bearing vast burdens on.
They are the great
Unconquerable spirit of these hills.

Ralph Hodgson

THE MYSTERY

He came and took me by the hand
Up to a red rose tree,
He kept His meaning to Himself
But gave a rose to me.

I did not pray Him to lay bare
The mystery to me;
Enough the rose was Heaven to smell,
And His own face to see.

THREE POEMS

I

Babylon—where I go dreaming
When I weary of today,
Weary of a world grown gray.

II

God loves an idle rainbow,
No less than laboring seas.

III

Reason has moons, but moons not hers
  Lie mirrored on her sea,
Confounding her astronomers,
  But oh, delighting me!

STUPIDITY STREET

I saw with open eyes
  Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
  For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
  Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
  The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
  For people to eat;
Nothing for sale in
  Stupidity Street.

Horace Holley

CREATIVE

Renew the vision of delight
By vigil, praise and prayer,
Till every sinew leaps in might
And every sense is fair.

TWILIGHT AT VERSAILLES

Unfold for men, O God, love's true, creative day,
To flower our barren souls by mellow sun and noon:
The glory of old thought is still, and cold, and gray,
Like gardens unrenewed beneath the sterile moon.

LOVERS

Whate'er our joy compelled, men's praise and blame fall hollow,
A voice upon the winds that drown it as they blow:
So fair a vision led, our thought was all to follow;
So strong a passion urged, our will was all to go.

Helen Hoyt

ELLIS PARK

Little park that I pass through,
I carry off a piece of you
Every morning hurrying down
To my work-day in the town;
Carry you for country there
To make the city ways more fair.
I take your trees,
And your breeze,

Your greenness,
Your cleanness,
Some of your shade, some of your sky,
Some of your calm as I go by;
Your flowers to trim
The pavements grim;
Your space for room in the jostled street,
And grass for carpet to my feet;
Your fountains take and sweet bird calls
To sing me from my office walls.
All that I can see
I carry off with me.
But you never miss my theft,
So much treasure you have left.
As I find you, fresh at morning,
So I find you, home returning—
Nothing lacking from your grace.
All your riches wait in place
For me to borrow
On the morrow.

Do you hear this praise of you,
Little park that I pass through?

THE NEW-BORN

I have heard them in the night—
The cry of their fear,
Because there is no light,
Because they do not hear
Familiar sounds and feel the familiar arm,
And they awake alone.
Yet they have never known
Danger or harm.
What is their dread?—
This dark about their bed?
But they are so lately come
Out of the dark womb

Where they were safely kept.
That blackness was good;
And the silence of that solitude
Wherein they slept
Was kind.
Where did they find
Knowledge of death?
Caution of darkness and cold?
These—of the little, new breath—
Have they a prudence so old?

RAIN AT NIGHT

Are you awake? Do you hear the rain?
How rushingly it strikes upon the ground,
And on the roof, and the wet window-pane!
Sometimes I think it is a comfortable sound,
Making us feel how safe and snug we are:
Closing us off in this dark, away from the dark outside.
The rest of the world seems dim tonight, mysterious and far.
Oh, there is no world left! Only darkness, darkness stretching wide,
And full of the blind rain's immeasurable fall!

How nothing must we seem unto this ancient thing!
How nothing unto the earth—and we so small!
Oh, wake, wake!—do you not feel my hands cling?
One day it will be raining as it rains tonight; the same wind blow—
Raining and blowing on this house wherein we lie: but you and I—
We shall not hear, we shall not ever know.
O love, I had forgot that we must die.

THE LOVER SINGS OF A GARDEN

Oh, beautiful are the flowers of your garden,
The flowers of your garden are fair:
Blue flowers of your eyes
And dusk flower of your hair;

Dew flower of your mouth
And peony-budded breasts,
And the flower of the curve of your hand
Where my hand rests.

SINCE I HAVE FELT THE SENSE OF DEATH

Since I have felt the sense of death,
Since I have borne its dread, its fear—
Oh, how my life has grown more dear
Since I have felt the sense of death!
Sorrows are good, and cares are small,
Since I have known the loss of all.

Since I have felt the sense of death,
And death forever at my side—
Oh, how the world has opened wide
Since I have felt the sense of death!
My hours are jewels that I spend,
For I have seen the hours end.

Since I have felt the sense of death,
Since I have looked on that black night—
My inmost brain is fierce with light
Since I have felt the sense of death.
O dark, that made my eyes to see!
O death, that gave my life to me.

HAPPINESS BETRAYS ME

Happiness betrays me—
Happiness slays me!

Sorrow was kind and loneliness was my sweet companion,
Denial gave me good gifts.
Now freedom is a bondage upon me.
And smoothness slackens my feet.

I will find my way back to the thorns;
I will find my way back again to the good thorns and steepness.

Happiness betrays me—
Happiness slays me.

MEMORY

I can remember our sorrow, I can remember our laughter;
I know that surely we kissed and cried and ate together;
I remember our places and games, and plans we had—
The little house and how all came to naught—
Remember well:
But I cannot remember our love,
I cannot remember our love.

ARCHES

Under the high-arching bridge
The shadow arch
Bends itself,
Curved
Down into the water;
And lies in the water
As motionless
As the arch above it is motionless:
Masonry of the dusk.

THE STONE-AGE SEA

Never has ship sailed on that sea
Nor ray of tower shone on it;
Motionless, without desire or memory,
Like a great languorous sea of stone it lies.
And as these ledges of rock on which they sit—
So stony, so unseeing—are the eyes

Of this strange folk who from the naked shore
Look ever beyond them to the aged face
Of the waters. One with the hoar
Mighty boulders they seem, one with the deep:
These the first beings of the first rude race
Of time. Their hearts are still locked asleep,
So lately from the gray marble were they torn:
And all the multitudes of the world are yet unborn.

Ford Madox Hueffer

ANTWERP

I

Gloom!
An October like November;
August a hundred thousand hours,
And all September;
A hundred thousand dragging sunlit days,
And half October like a thousand years . . .
And doom!
That then was Antwerp . . .
In the name of God,
How could they do it?
Those souls that usually dived
Into the dirty caverns of mines;
Who usually hived
In whitened hovels; under ragged poplars;
Who dragged muddy shovels over the grassy mud,
Lumbering to work over the greasy sods . . .
Those men there, with the appearance of clods,
Were the bravest men that a usually listless priest of God
Ever shrived . . .
And it is not for us to make them an anthem.
If we found words there would come no wind that would fan them
To a tune that the trumpets might blow it,
Shrill through the heaven that's ours or yet Allah's,
Or the wide halls of any Valhallas.

We can make no such anthem. So that all that is ours
For inditing in sonnets, pantoums, elegiacs, or lays,
Is this:
"In the name of God, how could they do it?"

II

For there is no new thing under the sun,
Only this uncomely man with a smoking gun
In the gloom. . . .
What the devil will he gain by it?
Digging a hole in the mud and standing all day in the rain by it
Waiting his doom;
The sharp blow, the swift outpouring of the blood
Till the trench of gray mud
Is turned to a brown purple drain by it.
Well, there have been scars
Won in many wars,
Punic,
Lacedæmonian, wars of Napoleon, wars for faith, wars for honor,
for love, for possession,
But this Belgian man in his ugly tunic,
His ugly round cap, shooting on, in a sort of obsession,
Overspreading his miserable land,
Standing with his wet gun in his hand. . . .
Doom!
He finds that in a sudden scrimmage,
And lies, an unsightly lump on the sodden grass . . .
An image that shall take long to pass!

III

For the white-limbed heroes of Hellas ride by upon their horses
Forever through our brains.
The heroes of Cressy ride by upon their stallions;
And battalions and battalions and battalions—
The Old Guard, the Young Guard, the men of Minden and of
Waterloo,
Pass, for ever staunch,
Stand, for ever true;

And the small man with the large paunch,
And the gray coat, and the large hat, and the hands behind the back,
Watches them pass
In our minds for ever. . . .
But that clutter of sodden corses
On the sodden Belgian grass—
That is a strange new beauty.

IV

With no especial legends of marchings or triumphs or duty,
Assuredly that is the way of it,
The way of beauty. . . .
And that is the highest word you can find to say of it.
For you cannot praise it with words
Compounded of lyres and swords,
But the thought of the gloom and the rain
And the ugly coated figure, standing beside a drain,
Shall eat itself into your brain.
And that shall be an honorable word—
"Belgian" shall be an honorable word;
As honorable as the fame of the sword,
As honorable as the mention of the many-chorded lyre,
And his old coat shall seem as beautiful as the fabrics woven in Tyre.

V

And what in the world did they bear it for?
I don't know.
And what in the world did they dare it for?
Perhaps that is not for the likes of me to understand.
They could very well have watched a hundred legions go
Over their fields and between their cities
Down into more southerly regions.
They could very well have let the legions pass through their woods,
And have kept their lives and their wives and their children and cattle and goods.
I don't understand.
Was it just love of their land?
Oh, poor dears!

Can any man so love his land?
Give them a thousand thousand pities
And rivers and rivers of tears
To wash off the blood from the cities of Flanders.

VI

This is Charing Cross;
It is midnight;
There is a great crowd
And no light—
A great crowd, all black, that hardly whispers aloud.
Surely, that is a dead woman—a dead mother!
She has a dead face;
She is dressed all in black;
She wanders to the book-stall and back,
At the back of the crowd;
And back again and again back,
She sways and wanders.

This is Charing Cross;
It is one o'clock.
There is still a great cloud, and very little light;
Immense shafts of shadows over the black crowd
That hardly whispers aloud. . . .
And now! . . . That is another dead mother,
And there is another and another and another. . . .
And little children, all in black,
All with dead faces, waiting in all the waiting-places,
Wandering from the doors of the waiting-room
In the dim gloom.
These are the women of Flanders:
They await the lost.
They await the lost that shall never leave the dock;
They await the lost that shall never again come by the train
To the embraces of all these women with dead faces;
They await the lost who lie dead in trench and barrier and fosse,
In the dark of the night.
This is Charing Cross; it is past one of the clock;
There is very little light.

There is so much pain.

L'Envoi:
And it was for this that they endured this gloom;
This October like November,
That August like a hundred thousand hours,
And that September;
A hundred thousand dragging sunlit days
And half October like a thousand years. . . .
Oh, poor dears!

FOOTSLOGGERS

To C. F. G. M.

I

What is love of one's land? . . .
I don't know very well.
It is something that sleeps
For a year, for a day,
For a month—something that keeps
Very hidden and quiet and still,
And then takes
The quiet heart like a wave,
The quiet brain like a spell,
The quiet will
Like a tornado; and that shakes
The whole of the soul.

II

It is omnipotent like love;
It is deep and quiet as the grave,
And it awakes
Like a flame, like a madness,
Like the great passion of your life.
The cold keenness of a tempered knife,
The great gladness of a wedding day,
The austerity of monks who wake to pray
In the dim light,
Who pray

In the darkling grove:
All these and a great belief in what we deem the right
Creeping upon us like the overwhelming sand
Driven by a December gale,
Make up the love of one's land.

. . . . . .

L'ENVOI

What is love of one's land?
Ah, we know very well
It is something that sleeps for a year, for a day,
For a month; something that keeps
Very hidden and quiet and still,
And then takes
The quiet heart like a wave,
The quiet brain like a spell,
The quiet will
Like a tornado, and that shakes
The whole being and soul . . .
Aye, the whole of the soul.

Orrick Johns

SONGS OF DELIVERANCE

I—THE SONG OF YOUTH

This is the song of youth,
This is the cause of myself;
I knew my father well and he was a fool,
Therefore will I have my own foot in the path before I take a step;
I will go only into new lands,
And I will walk on no plank-walks.
The horses of my family are wind-broken,
And the dogs are old,
And the guns rusty:
I will make me a new bow from an ash-tree.
And cut up the homestead into arrows.

Behold how people stand around!
(There are always crowds of people standing around,
Whose legs have no knees)—
While the engineers put up steel work. . . .
Is it something to catch the sunlight,
Jewelry and gew-gaw?
I have no time to wait for them to build bridges for me;
Where awful the gap seems stretching there is no gap,
Leaping I take it at once from a thought to a thought.
I can no more walk in the stride of other men
Than be father of their children.

My treasure lured like a bright star,
And I went to it young and desirous.
Lo, as it stood there in its great chests,
The wise men came up with the keys,
Crying, "Blasphemy, blasphemy!"
For I had broken the locks. . . .
And when the procession went waving to a funeral,
They cried it again;
For I stayed in my home and spoke truth about the dead.

Much did I learn waiting in my youth;
At the door of a great man I waited on one foot and then on the other.
The files passed in and out before me to the antechamber, for at that door I was not favored:
(O costly preferment!)
Yet I watched them coming and going,
And I learned the great man by heart from the stories on their faces.
When presently the retainers arrived, one above the other in a row, saying:
"The great man is ready,"
I had long been a greater than he.

This is the reason for myself:
When I used to go in the races, I had but one prayer,
And I went first before the judges, saying:

"Give everyone a distance, such as you consider best;
I will run scratch."

II—VIRGINS

I have had one fear in my life—
When I was young I feared virgins;
But I do not any more. . . .
By contact with them I learn that each is a center,
And has a period of brightness,
And stands epitome in that brief space
Of the Universe!
Ah, the ephemeral eternal!
In virgins' eyes I would live reflected as in a globe,
And know myself purer than crystal.

III—NO PREY AM I

No prey am I of poor thoughts.
I leave all of my followers; I tire quickly of them;
I send them away from me when they ask too much; for though I live alone
Still will I live, night and day . . .

There is not anything in me save mutation and laughter;
My laughter is like a sword,
Like the piston-rod that defies oceans and grades.
When I labor it is a song of battle in the broad noon;
For behold the muscles of a man—
They are piston-rods; they are cranes, hydraulic presses, powder-magazines:
But though my body be as beautiful as a hill crowned with flowers
I will despise it and make it obey me . . .

Is the old love dead?
Then I shall await the new,
To embrace it more sturdily and passionately than ever the old;
And break it under the white force of my laughter
Until it lies passive in my arms.
There is nothing in me but renewal.

If my friend bow his head over me I soon surprise him with shouts
of joy;
For in an instant I am again what I was,
Only with a few moments more of the infusion of earth.
I tell him, the griever, to follow me and he is a griever no more;
He raises his head and must follow.
Yet it is my battle, not his battle,
For in me I absorb others. . . .
I hail parties and partisans from afar;
Not men but parties are my comrades,
Not persons but nations are my associates.
I shake the hand of nations;
For I am a nation and a party, and majorities do not elect me—
I elect myself.
I swam in the sea, and lo!
The continents assembled like islands off my coast.
My talk with Homer and Bonaparte, with David and Garibaldi,
with China and Pharaoh and Texas;
When I laugh it is with Lucifer and Rabelais.
A pathfinder is my mistress, one hard to keep and unbridled—
I have no respect for tame women.
My friends and I do not meet every day,
For we are centuries apart, our salutations girdle the globe.
I have eaten locusts with Jeremiah;
I invite all hatreds and the stings of little creatures—
They enrich me, I glory in my parasites.

No man shall ever read me,
For I bring about in a gesture what they cannot fathom in a life;
Yet I tell Bob and Harry and Bill—
It costs me nothing to be kind;
If I am a generous adversary, be not deceived, neither be devoted—
It is because I despise you.
Yet if any man claim to be my peer I shall meet him,
For that man has an insolence that I like;
I am beholden to him.
I know the lightning when I see it,
And the toad when I see it. . . .
I warn all pretenders.

Yet before I came it was known of me to the chosen, all that I should do.
Every tree knew it;
Every lion and every leech knew it—
And called out to meet the new enemy,
The new friend. . . .
What power can deny me?
It was known that I should do not one thing but hundreds,
For I despise my works and make them obey me.
I have my time and I bide it. . . .
It was known that I should turn no whit from my end, until I had attained it.

Nothing has scathed me,
Nothing ever, nor ever will.
I have touched pitch, I have revelled in it and rolled in it;
Buried in mire and filth, I laughed long,
And sprang up.
I have loved lust and vain deviltries.
And taken them into my heart—
Their dirt and their lies—and my heart was aflame
With a new fancy. . .
Not me can pitch defile!
For the Spring, my sister, rose under my feet
And I was again naked and white,
Ready to dive into the deep pool, green and bottomless,
The medium for heroes, since it is dangerous and beautiful—
The pool of Tomorrow!
It is because I breathe like fishes and live in the waters of Tomorrow that Death fears me. . . .

How often I have intercepted thee, O Death!
O windy liar!
Thou canst do nothing against me;
If I command thee to stand back thou art afraid and cowerest,
For I have caught thee often and punished thee. . . .

I am the greatest laugher of all,
Greater than the sun and the oak-tree,

Than the frog and Apollo;
I laugh all day long!
I laugh at Death, I hail Death, I kiss her on the cheek as a lover his bride,
But the lover goes not to his bride unless he desire her;
I go not to Death until I am ready.
The strong lover goes not to his bride save when he would people his land with sons;
Then I, too, I go not to Death, save it be for the labor greater than all others.
I shall break her with my laughter;
I shall complete her. . . .
Only then shall Death be when I die!

LITTLE THINGS

There's nothing very beautiful and nothing very gay
About the rush of faces in the town by day,
But a light tan cow in a pale green mead,
That is very beautiful, beautiful indeed. . . .
And the soft March wind, and the low March mist
Are better than kisses in a dark street kissed. . . .
The fragrance of the forest when it wakes at dawn,
The fragrance of a trim green village lawn,
The hearing of the murmur of the rain at play—
These things are beautiful, beautiful as day!
And I shan't stand waiting for love or scorn
When the feast is laid for a day new-born. . . .
Oh, better let the little things I loved when little
Return when the heart finds the great things brittle;
And better is a temple made of bark and thong
Than a tall stone temple that may stand too long.

THE TREE TOAD

A tiny bell the tree-toad has
I wonder if he knows
The charm it is to hear him
Ringing as he goes.

He can't have gone the journeys
  He tells me to go on,
Here in the darkness
  Of the cool dropped lawn.

He cannot know the thrill
  Of the soft spring wind,
Or the wonder, when you walk,
  What will come behind.

He hasn't seen the places
  I'd break my heart to win,
Nor heard the city calling
  When the cold comes in.

He sings away contented
  And doesn't leave his tree.
But he sets my blood a-going
  Where his song will never be.

THE INTERPRETER

In the very early morning, when the light was low,
She got all together and she went like snow—
Like snow in the springtime on a sunny hill;
And we were only frightened and can't think still.

We can't think quite that the katydids and frogs,
And the little crying chickens and the little grunting hogs,
And the other living things that she spoke for to us
Have nothing more to tell her since it happened thus.

She never is around for anyone to touch,
But of ecstasy and longing she knew too much. . . .
And always when anyone has time to call his own
She will come and be beside him as quiet as a stone.

WILD PLUM

They are unholy who are born
To love wild plum at night,
Who once have passed it on a road
Glimmering and white.

It is as though the darkness had
Speech of silver words,
Or as though a cloud of stars
Perched like ghostly birds.

They are unpitied from their birth
And homeless in men's sight,
Who love, better than the earth,
Wild plum at night.

THE ANSWER

"Crying cranes and wheeling crows—
I'll remember them," she said;
"And I will be your own, God knows,
And the sin be on my head.

"I will be your own and glad;
Lovers would be fools to care
How a thing is good or bad
When the sky is everywhere.

"I will be your own," she said,
"Because your voice is like the rain,
And your kiss is wine and bread,
Better than my father's grain."

So I took her where she spoke,
Breasts of snow and burning mouth . . . .
Crying cranes and drifting smoke
And the blackbirds wheeling south.

THE DOOR

Love is a proud and gentle thing, a better thing to own
Than all of the wide impossible stars over the heavens blown,
And the little gifts her hand gives are careless given or taken,
And though the whole great world break, the heart of her is not
shaken. . . .

Love is a viol in the wind, a viol never stilled,
And mine of all is the surest that ever God has willed.
I shall speak to her though she goes before me into the grave,
And though I drown in the sea, herself shall come upon a wave.
And the things that love gives after shall be as they were before,
For life is only a small house . . . and love is an open door.

Fenton Johnson

THREE NEGRO SPIRITUALS

THE LOST LOVE

Oh, where has my honey gone?
Fly away, my Jubal, fly away!
O where have they laid her bones?
Fly away, my Jubal, fly away!
Conjure woman shake her head,
Preacher dumb and master sad.
Nobody knows!
Nobody knows!

Why the tears that drop all night?
Fly away, my Jubal, fly away!
Why the heart that burns like fire?
Fly away, my Jubal, fly away!
Angel close the Book of Life,
Moon goes down and stars grow cold.
Nobody knows!
Nobody knows!

WHO IS THAT A-WALKING IN THE CORN?

Who is that a-walking in the corn?
I have looked to East and looked to West
But nowhere could I find Him who walks
Master's cornfield in the morning.

Who is that a-walking in the corn?
Is it Joshua, the son of Nun?—
Or King David come to fight the giant
Near the cornfield in the morning?

Who is that a-walking in the corn?
Is it Peter jangling Heaven's keys?—
Or old Gabriel come to blow his horn
Near the cornfield in the morning?

Who is that a-walking in the corn?
I have looked to East and looked to West
But nowhere could I find Him who walks
Master's cornfield in the morning.

THE LONELY MOTHER

Oh, my mother's moaning by the river,
My poor mother's moaning by the river,
For her son who walks the earth in sorrow.
Long my mother's moaned beside the river,
And her tears have filled an angel's pitcher:
"Lord of Heaven, bring to me my honey,
Bring to me the darling of my bosom,
For a lonely mother by the river."

Cease, O mother, moaning by the river;
Cease, good mother, moaning by the river.
I have seen the star of Michael shining,
Michael shining at the Gates of Morning.
Row, O mighty angel, down the twilight,
Row until I find a lonely woman,
Swaying long beneath a tree of cypress,
Swaying for her son who walks in sorrow.

James Joyce

SIMPLES

O bella, bionda
sei come l'onda

Of cool sweet dew and radiance mild
The moon a web of silence weaves
In the still garden where a child
Gathers the simple salad leaves.

A moon-dew stars her hanging hair,
And moonlight touches her young brow;
And, gathering, she sings an air:
"Fair as the wave is, fair art thou."

Be mine, I pray, a waxen ear
To shield me from her childish croon;
And mine a shielded heart to her
Who gathers simples of the moon.

SHE WEEPS OVER RAHOON

Rain on Rahoon falls softly, softly falling
Where my dark lover lies.
Sad is his voice that calls me, sadly calling
At grey moonrise.

Love, hear thou
How desolate the heart is, ever calling,
Ever unanswered—and the dark rain falling
Then as now.

Dark too our hearts, O love, shall lie, and cold
As his sad heart has lain
Under the moon-grey nettles, the black mould
And muttering rain.

ON THE BEACH AT FONTANA

Wind whines and whines the shingle;
The crazy pier-stakes groan;
A senile sea numbers each single
Slime-silvered stone.

From whining wind and colder
Grey sea I wrap him warm,
And touch his fine-boned boyish shoulder
And trembling arm.

Around us fear, descending,
Darkness of fear above;
And in my heart how sweet unending
Ache of love.

ALONE

The moon's soft golden meshes make
All night a veil;
The shore-lamps in the sleeping lake
Laburnum tendrils trail.

The sly reeds whisper in the night
A name—her name;
And all my soul is a delight,
A swoon of shame.

ALL DAY I HEAR

All day I hear the noise of waters
Making moan,
Sad as the sea-bird is when, going
Forth alone,
He hears the winds cry to the waters'
Monotone.

The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing
Where I go.
I hear the noise of many waters
Far below.
All day, all night, I hear them flowing
To and fro.

Aline Kilmer

MY MIRROR

There is a mirror in my room
Less like a mirror than a tomb,
There are so many ghosts that pass
Across the surface of the glass.

When in the morning I arise
With circles round my tired eyes,
Seeking the glass to brush my hair,
My mother's mother meets me there.

If in the middle of the day
I happen to go by that way,
I see a smile I used to know—
My mother, twenty years ago.

But when I rise by candlelight
To feed my baby in the night,
Then whitely in the glass I see
My dead child's face look out at me.

I SHALL NOT BE AFRAID

I shall not be afraid any more,
Either by night or day.
What would it profit me to be afraid
With you away?

Now I am brave. In the dark night alone
All through the house I go,
Locking the doors and making windows fast
When sharp winds blow.

For there is only sorrow in my heart;
There is no room for fear.
But how I wish I were afraid again,
My dear, my dear!

ONE SHALL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT

There is no Rachel any more,
And so it does not really matter.
Leah alone is left, and she
Goes her own way inscrutably.
Soft-eyed she goes, content to scatter
Fine sand along a barren shore
Where there was sand enough before;
Or from a well that has no water
Raising a futile pitcher up
Lifts to her lips an empty cup.
Now she is Laban's only daughter—
There is no Rachel any more.

FOR ALL LADIES OF SHALOTT

The web flew out and floated wide:
Poor lady!—I was with her then.
She gathered up her piteous pride,
But she could never weave again.

The mirror cracked from side to side;
I saw its silver shadows go:
"The curse has come on me!" she cried.
Poor lady!—I had told her so.

She was so proud, she would not hide;
She only laughed and tried to sing.
But singing, in her song she died;
She did not profit anything.

THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS

The heart knoweth? If this be true indeed,
Then the thing that I bear in my bosom is not a heart,
For it knows no more than a hollow, whispering reed
That answers to every wind.
I am sick of the thing. I think we had better part.

My heart would come to any piper's calling—
A fool in motley that dances for any king;
But my body knows, and its tears unbidden falling
Say that my heart has sinned.
You would have my heart? You may. I am sick of the thing.

Joyce Kilmer

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks to God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair,

Upon whose bosom snow has lain,
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

EASTER

The air is like a butterfly
With frail blue wings.
The happy earth looks at the sky
And sings.

POETS

Vain is the chiming of forgotten bells
That the wind sways above a ruined shrine.
Vainer his voice in whom no longer dwells
Hunger that craves immortal Bread and Wine.

Light songs we breathe that perish with our breath
Out of our lips that have not kissed the rod.
They shall not live who have not tasted death;
They only sing who are struck dumb by God.

Alfred Kreymborg

AMERICA

Up and down he goes,
With terrible reckless strides,
Flaunting great lamps
With joyous swings—
One to the East
And one to the West!
And flaunting two words
In a thunderous call
That thrills the hearts of all enemies:
All, One; All, One; All, One; All, One.
Beware that queer, wild, wonderful boy
And his playground—don't go near!
All, One; All, One; All, One; All, One;
Up and down he goes.

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
Is that beautiful old parchment
In which the sun
And the moon
Keep their diary.
To read it all,
One must be a linguist
More learned than Father Wisdom;
And a visionary
More clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it
One must be an apostle:
One who is more than intimate
In having been, always,
The only confidant—
Like the earth
Or the sea.

CÉZANNE

Our door was shut to the noon-day heat—
We could not see him.
We might not have heard him either—
Resting, dozing, dreaming pleasantly.
But his step was tremendous—
Are mountains on the march?

He was no man who passed;
But a great faithful horse
Dragging a load
Up the hill.

PARASITE

Good woman,
Don't love the man.
Love yourself,
As you have done so exquisitely before.

Like that tortoise-shell cat of yours
Washing away the flies; or are they fleas?
You've hurt him again?
Good!
Do it often.
No,
He'll love you the more—
Always.
Remember how he forgave you the last time,
And how he loved you in the forgiving.
Give him an adventure in godhood
And the higher moralities.
Hurt him again.
Fine!

PASTS

Science
Drove his plough—
So straight,
So strong,
So true—
Deep and far
Into the past,
And turned it topsy-turvy.
Now
We are frantically busy,
With all of our many hands,
Sowing the next past.

DIRGE

She came—
That wistful child—
On her way to red.
Deep red:
She came—
And they tried to tell him
She was Dawn.

She went—
That listless thing—
On her way to black,
Deep black:
She went—
And they tried to tell him
She was Night.

INDIAN SKY

The old squaw
Is one
With the old stone behind her.
Both have squatted there—
Ask mesa
Or mountain how long?
The bowl she holds—
Clay shawl of her art,
Clay ritual of her faith—
Is one
With the thought of the past,
And one with the now;
Though dim, a little old, strange.
The earth holds her
As she holds the bowl—
Ask kiva
Or shrine how much longer?
No titan,
No destroyer,
No future thought,
Can part
Earth and this woman,
Woman and bowl:
The same shawl
Wraps them around.

William Laird

TRAÜMEREI AT OSTENDORFF'S

I ate at Ostendorff's, and saw a dame
With eager golden eyes, paired with a red,
Bald, chilled old man. Piercing the clatter came
Keen *Traümerei*. On the sound he bowed his head,
Covered his eyes, and looked on things long sped.
Her white fierce fingers strained, but could not stir
His close-locked hands, nor bring him back to her.

Let him alone, bright lady; for he clips
A fairer lass than you, with all your fire.
Let him alone; he touches sweeter lips
Than yours he hired, as others yet shall hire.
Leave him the quickening pang of clean desire,
Even though vain; nor taint those spring winds blown
From banks of perished bloom: let him alone.

Bitter-sweet melody, that call'st to tryst
Love from the hostile dark, would God thy breath
Might break upon him now, through thickening mist,
The trumpet-summons of imperial Death;
That now, with fire-clean lips where quivereth
Atoning sorrow, he shall seek the eyes
Long turned towards earth from fields of paradise.

In vain: by virtue of a far-off smile,
Men may be deaf a space to gross behests
Of nearer voices; for some little while
Sharp pains of youth may burn in old men's breasts.
But—men must eat, though angels be their guests:
The waiter brought spaghetti; he looked up,
Hemmed, blinked, and fiddled with his coffee-cup.

A VERY OLD SONG

"Daughter, thou art come to die:
  Sound be thy sleeping, lass."
"Well, without lament or cry,
  Mother, let me pass."

"What things on mould were best of all?
  (Soft be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"The apples reddening till they fall
In the sun beside the convent wall.
  Let me pass."

"Whom on earth hast thou loved best?
  (Sound be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"Him that shared with me thy breast;
Thee; and a knight last year our guest.
He hath an heron to his crest.
  Let me pass."

"What leavest thou of fame or hoard?
  (Soft be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"My far-blown shame for thy reward;
To my brother, gold to get him a sword.
  Let me pass."

"But what wilt leave thy lover, Grim?
  (Sound be thy sleeping, lass.)"
"The hair he kissed to strangle him.
  Mother, let me pass."

D. H. Lawrence

A WOMAN AND HER DEAD HUSBAND

Ah, stern cold man,
How can you lie so relentless hard
While I wash you with weeping water!
Ah, face carved hard and cold,
You have been like this, on your guard
Against me, since death began.

You masquerader!
How can you shame to act this part
Of unswerving indifference to me?
It is not you; why disguise yourself
Against me, to break my heart,
You evader?

You've a warm mouth,
A good warm mouth always sooner to soften
Even than your sudden eyes.
Ah cruel, to keep your mouth
Relentless, however often
I kiss it in drouth.

You are not he.
Who are you, lying in his place on the bed,
And rigid and indifferent to me?
His mouth, though he laughed or sulked,
Was always warm and red
And good to me.

And his eyes could see
The white moon hang like a breast revealed
By the slipping shawl of stars,
Could see the small stars tremble
As the heart beneath did wield
Systole, diastole.

And he showed it me
So, when he made his love to me;
And his brows like rocks on the sea jut out,
And his eyes were deep like the sea
With shadow, and he looked at me
Till I sank in him like the sea,
Awfully.

Oh, he was multiform—
Which then was he among the manifold?
The gay, the sorrowful, the seer?
I have loved a rich race of men in one—
But not this, this never-warm
Metal-cold—!

Ah masquerader!
With your steel face white-enamelled,
Were you he, after all, and I never
Saw you or felt you in kissing?
—Yet sometimes my heart was trammelled
With fear, evader!

Then was it you
After all—this cold, hard man?
—Ah no, look up at me,
Tell me it isn't true,
That you're only frightening me!

You will not stir,
Nor hear me, not a sound.
—Then it was you—
And all this time you were
Like this when I lived with you.

It is not true,
I am frightened, I am frightened of you
And of everything.
O God!—God too
Has deceived me in everything,
In everything.

FIREFLIES IN THE CORN

A woman taunts her lover:
Look at the little darlings in the corn!
The rye is taller than you, who think yourself
So high and mighty: look how its heads are borne
Dark and proud on the sky, like a number of knights
Passing with spears and pennants and manly scorn.

And always likely! Oh, if I could ride
With my head held high-serene against the sky,
Do you think I'd have a creature like you at my side
With your gloom and your doubt that you love me?
O darling rye,
How I adore you for your simple pride!

And those bright fireflies wafting in between
And over the swaying cornstalks, just above
All their dark-feathered helmets, like little green
Stars come low and wandering here for love
Of this dark earth, and wandering all serene!

How I adore you, you happy things, you dears,
Riding the air and carrying all the time
Your little lanterns behind you! It cheers
My heart to see you settling and trying to climb
The corn-stalks, tipping with fire their spears.

All over the corn's dim motion, against the blue
Dark sky of night, the wandering glitter, the swarm
Of questing brilliant things—you joy, you true
Spirit of careless joy! Ah, how I warm
My poor and perished soul at the joy of you!

The man answers and she mocks:
You're a fool, woman. I love you, and you know I do!
—Lord, take his love away, it makes him whine.
And I give you everything that you want me to.
—Lord, dear Lord, do you think he ever *can* shine?

GREEN

The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

GRIEF

The darkness steals the forms of all the queens.
But oh, the palms of her two black hands are red!
It is Death I fear so much, it is not the dead—
Not this gray book, but the red and bloody scenes.

The lamps are white like snowdrops in the grass;
The town is like a churchyard, all so still
And gray, now night is here: nor will
Another torn red sunset come to pass.

And so I sit and turn the book of gray,
Feeling the shadows like a blind man reading,
All fearful lest I find some next word bleeding.
Nay, take my painted missal book away.

SERVICE OF ALL THE DEAD

Between the avenue of cypresses
All in their scarlet capes and surplices
Of linen, go the chaunting choristers,
The priests in gold and black, the villagers.

And all along the path to the cemetery
The round dark heads of men crowd silently;
And black-scarfed faces of women-folk wistfully
Watch at the banner of death, and the mystery.

And at the foot of a grave a father stands
With sunken head, and forgotten, folded hands;
And at the foot of a grave a mother kneels
With pale shut face, nor neither hears nor feels

The coming of the chaunting choristers
Between the avenue of cypresses,
The silence of the many villagers,
The candle-flames beside the surplices.

NOSTALGIA

The waning moon looks upward, this grey night
Sheers round the heavens in one smooth curve
Of easy sailing. Odd red wicks serve
To show where the ships at sea move out of sight.

This place is palpable me, for here I was born
Of this self-same darkness. Yet the shadowy house below
Is out of bounds, and only the old ghosts know
I have come—they whimper about me, welcome and mourn.

My father suddenly died in the harvesting corn,
And the place is no longer ours. Watching, I hear
No sound from the strangers; the place is dark, and fear
Opens my eyes till the roots of my vision seem torn.

Can I go nearer, never towards the door?
The ghosts and I, we mourn together, and shrink
In the shadow of the cart-shed—hovering on the brink
For ever, to enter the homestead no more.

Is it irrevocable? Can I really not go
Through the open yard-way? Can I not pass the sheds
And through to the mowie? Only the dead in their beds
Can know the fearful anguish that this is so.

I kiss the stones. I kiss the moss on the wall,
And wish I could pass impregnate into the place.
I wish I could take it all in a last embrace.
I wish with my heart I could crush it, perish it all.

A BABY ASLEEP AFTER PAIN

As a drenched drowned bee
Hangs numb and heavy from a bending flower,
So clings to me
My baby, her brown hair brushed with wet tears
And laid against her cheek;
Her soft white legs hanging heavily over my arm,
Swinging heavily to my movement as I walk.
My sleeping baby hangs upon my life,
Like a burden she hangs on me.
She has always seemed so light,
But now she is wet with tears and numb with pain.
Even her floating hair sinks heavily,
Reaching downwards;
As the wings of a drenched, drowned bee
Are a heaviness, and a weariness.

MOONRISE

And who has seen the moon, who has not seen
Her rise from out the chamber of the deep
Flushed and grand and naked, as from the chamber
Of finished bridegroom, seen her rise and throw
Confession of delight upon the wave,
Littering the waves with her own superscription
Of bliss, till all her lambent beauty shakes toward us
Spread out and known at last: and we are sure
That beauty is a thing beyond the grave,
That perfect, bright experience never falls
To nothingness, and time will dim the moon
Sooner than our full consummation here
In this odd life will tarnish or pass away.

TOMMIES IN THE TRAIN

The sun shines.
The coltsfoot flowers along the railway banks
Shine flat like coin which Zeus, in thanks,
Showers on our lines.

A steeple
In purplish elms; daffodils
Sparkle beneath; luminous hills
Beyond—but no people.

England—O Danaë
To this spring of cosmic gold
Which falls on your lap of mould!
What then are we?

What are we—
Clay-colored, who roll in fatigue
As the train runs league after league
From our destiny?

Some hand is over my face,
Some dark hand. Peeping through the fingers,
I see a world that lingers
Behind, yet keeps pace.

Always, as I peep
Through the fingers that cover my face,
Something seems falling from place,
Seems to roll down the steep.

Is it the train,
That falls like a meteorite
Backward in space, to alight
Never again?

Or is it the illusory world,
That falls from reality

As we look? Or are we
Like a thunderbolt hurled?

One or another
We are lost, since we fall apart
Forever, forever depart
From each other.

RESURRECTION

Now all the hosts are marching to the grave;
The hosts are leaping from the edge of life
In a cascade of souls to sorrowful death.

And I am just awakened from the tomb;
And whither they are going, I have been
In timelessness laid by, in noiseless death.

Now, like a crocus in the autumn time,
My soul comes lambent from the endless night
Of death—a cyclamen, a crocus flower
Of windy autumn when the winds all sweep
The hosts away to death, where heap on heap
The dead are burning in the funeral wind.

Now, like a strange light breaking from the ground,
I venture from the halls of shadowy death—
A frail white gleam of resurrection.

I know where they are going, all the lives
That whirl and sweep like anxious leaves away
To have no rest save in the utter night
Of noiseless death; I know it well—
The death they will attain to, where they go—
I, who have been, and now am risen again.

Now like a cyclamen, a crocus flower
In autumn, like to a messenger come back
From embassy in death, I issue forth

Amid the autumn rushing red about
The bitter world, amid the smoke
From burning fires of many smouldering lives,
All bitter and corroding to the grave.

If they would listen, I could tell them now
The secret of the noiseless utter grave,
The secret in the blind mouth of the worm.
But on they go, like leaves within a wind,
Scarlet and crimson and a rust of blood,
Into the utter dark: they cannot hear.

So like a cyclamen, a crocus flower
I lift my inextinguishable flame
Of immortality into the world,
Of resurrection from the endless grave,
Of sweet returning from the sleep of death.

And still against the dark and violent wind,
Against the scarlet and against the red
And blood-brown flux of lives that sweep their way
In hosts towards the everlasting night,
I lift my little pure and lambent flame,
Unquenchable of wind or hosts of death
Or storms of tears, or rage, or blackening rain
Of full despair, I lift my tender flame
Of pure and lambent hostage from the dead—
Ambassador from halls of noiseless death,
He who returns again from out the tomb
Dressed in the grace of immortality,
A fragile stranger in the flux of lives
That pour cascade-like down the blackening wind
Of sheer oblivion.

Now like a cyclamen, a crocus flower
In putrid autumn issuing through the fall
Of lives, I speak to all who cannot hear;
I turn towards the bitter blackening wind,
I speak aloud to fleeting hosts of red

And crimson and the blood-brown heaps of slain,
Just as a cyclamen or crocus flower
Calls to the autumn, *Resurrection!*
I speak with a vain mouth.

Yet is uplifted in me the pure beam
Of immortality to kindle up
Another spring of yet another year,
Folded as yet: and all the fallen leaves
Sweep on to bitter, to corrosive death
Against me, yet they cannot make extinct
The perfect lambent flame which still goes up,
A tender gleam of immortality,
To start the glory of another year,
Another epoch in another year,
Another triumph on the face of earth,
Another race, another speech among
The multitudinous people unfused,
Unborn and unproduced, yet to be born.

Agnes Lee

MOTHERHOOD

Mary, the Christ long slain, passed silently,
Following the children joyously astir
Under the cedrus and the olive-tree,
Pausing to let their laughter float to her.
Each voice an echo of a voice more dear,
She saw a little Christ in every face.

Then came another woman gliding near
To watch the tender life that filled the place.
And Mary spoke to her: "I know thee not,
And yet I know the same heart-hungerings send
Our footsteps here; for the children bring us back
Something . . . something we lost. O stranger, friend,

"I too have rocked my Lovely One—
And He was fair!
He was more luminous than the sun,
And like its rays through amber was
His sun-bright hair.
Still I can see it shine and shine."
"Even so," the woman said, "was mine."

"His ways were ever darling ways"—
And Mary smiled—
"So soft, so clinging! All our days
Were jewels strung on cords of love.
My Little Child!
My vanished star! My music fled!"
"Even so was mine," the woman said.

And Mary whispered: "Tell me, thou,
Of thine." And she:
"Oh, mine was rosy as a bough
Blooming with roses, and his eyes
Had lights of the sea!
His balmy fingers left a thrill
Deep in my breast that warms me still."

Then she gazed down some wilder, darker hour,
And said—when Mary questioned, knowing not,
"Who art thou, mother of so sweet a son?"—
"I am the mother of Iscariot."

A STATUE IN A GARDEN

I was a goddess ere the marble found me.
Wind, wind, delay not—
Waft my spirit where the laurel crowned me!
Will the wind stay not?

Then tarry, tarry, listen, little swallow!
An old glory feeds me—

I lay upon the bosom of Apollo!
Not a bird heeds me.

For here the days are alien. Oh, to waken
Mine, mine, with calling!
But on my shoulders bare, like hopes forsaken,
The dead leaves are falling.

The sky is gray and full of unshed weeping
As dim down the garden
I wait and watch the early autumn sweeping.
The stalks fade and harden.

The souls of all the flowers afar have rallied.
The trees, gaunt, appalling,
Attest the gloom, and on my shoulders pallid
The dead leaves are falling.

ON THE JAIL STEPS

I'm free again!
Young man, I'm new!
Old Sallow-face
Good luck to you!

I've served my turn,
I've paid for sin.
And you come out,
As I go in.

Ten years! but now,
I am free, free!
Ten years of dark
Shall gather me.

My wife—how long
She wept her pain!
She cannot smile;
She weeps again.

My little one
Shall know my call.
There is no child,
For sin grows tall.

Now who are you,
Spar of hell's flood?
And who, and who,
But your own blood?

HER GOING

The Wife

Child, why do you linger beside her portal?
None shall hear you now if you knock or clamor.
All is dark, hidden in heaviest leafage.
None shall behold you.

Truth

Gone, gone, the dear, the beautiful lady!
I was her comrade, I am here to lament her.
Ah, the day of her going all things lovely
Shared in her fleetness!
Tell of her going.

The Wife

You are a child. How tell you?

Truth

I am a child, yet old as the earliest sorrow.
Talk to me as you would to an old, old woman.
I own the ages.

The Wife

Voices, they say, gossiped around her dwelling.
She became aware, they say, and she vanished.
I am glad she is gone. The old hurt fastens.
Hate is upon me.

It was hard to live down the day, and wonder,
Wonder why the tears were forever falling,
Wonder if on his lips I tasted her kisses.

Truth

Woman, be silent!
Jealousy, mad, brooding blind and unfettered,
Takes its terrible leap over lies and malice.
Who shall question her now in the land of shadow?
Who shall uphold her?

The Wife

It was hard to know that peace had forsaken
All my house, to greet with a dull endeavor
Children, books, so to forget a moment
I was forgotten.

Truth

Who shall question her now in the land of shadow,
Question the mute pale lips, and the marble fingers,
Eyelids fallen on eyes grown dim as the autumn?
Ah, the beloved!

The Wife

Go, go, bringer of ache and discord!

Truth

Go I may not. Some, they think to inter me.
Out of the mold and clay my visible raiment
Rises forever.

The Wife

Hers the sin that swept the light from our threshold,
Hers the sin that I lost his love and grew bitter.

Truth

Lost his love? You never possessed it, woman.

The Wife

Sharp tongue, have pity! . . .

Yes, I knew. But I loved him, hoping for all.
I said in my heart: "Time shall bring buds to blossom."
I almost saw the flower of the flame descending.
Then—she came near us.

He is mine, mine, by the laws of the ages!
Mine, mine, mine—yes, body and spirit!
I am glad she has gone her way to the shadow.
Hate is upon me.

Oh, the bar over which my soul would see
All that eludes my soul! Clouds are before me!
Clouds are before me! Who shall dispel the clouds?—
For he remembers!

AN OLD WOMAN WITH FLOWERS

I like to see the eager-faced old woman
  Walking at sunset down the city street.
Always she holds against her heart with fervor
  Her sprays of meadow-sweet.

She passes daily, and I never see her
  Without the flowers she gathers to her so.
I do not know how destiny softens, hardens
  The ways her feet must go,

Nor what her eyes forever are beholding
  Beyond the sordid walls and grimy towers;
Nor what against her agèd heart she presses,
  Pressing the meadow flowers.

OLD LIZETTE ON SLEEP

Bed is the boon for me!
  It's well to bake and sweep,
But hear the word of old Lizette:
  It's better than all to sleep.

Summer and flowers are gay,
  And morning light and dew;
But agèd eyelids love the dark
  Where never a light seeps through.

What!—open-eyed, my dears,
  Thinking your hearts will break?
There's nothing, nothing, nothing, I say,
  That's worth the lying awake!

I learned it in my youth—
  Love I was dreaming of!
I learned it from the needle-work
  That took the place of love.

I learned it from the years
  And what they brought about;
From song, and from the hills of joy
  Where sorrow sought me out.

It's good to dream and turn,
  And turn and dream, or fall
To comfort with my pack of bones,
  And know nothing at all!

Yes, never know at all
  If prowlers mew or bark,
Nor wonder if it's three o'clock
  Or four o'clock of the dark.

When the longer shades have fallen,
  And the last weariness
Has brought the sweetest gift of life,
  The last forgetfulness,

If a sound as of old leaves
  Stir the last bed I keep,
Then say, my dears: "It's old Lizette—
  She's turning in her sleep."

MRS. MALOOLY

Mrs. Malooly has gone to her rest,
Who scrubbed Manhattan's marble aisles.
She has forgotten, forgotten, forgotten
The mop and broom
And the patterned tiles.

Mrs. Malooly has gone to her rest
In the smooth-dug loam, to a rest so deep
She has forgotten, forgotten, forgotten
The unmade bed
And the whiskey sleep.

THE SWEEPER

Frail, wistful guardian of the broom,
  The dwelling's drudge and stay,
Whom destiny gave a single task—
  To keep the dust away!—

Sweep off the floor and polish the chair.
  It will not always last:
Some day, for all your arms can do,
  The dust will hold you fast.

THE ILEX TREE

What spirit touched the faded lambrequin,
And slept? The doorway's lintel, ambered, rosed
With age, overlooks a stunted ilex tree
Grown in the middle path. Its branches guard
The house in silence, or with green dark gesture
Spreading protection, whisper pleadingly:
"The past is asleep behind the lambrequin.
Do not go in. The door is closed."

Muna Lee

A SONG OF HAPPINESS

So many folk are happy folk—
  The feathered folk and furred!
And many a kindly glance I've had,
  And many a brisk bright word,

From squirrel and from gray fieldmouse,
  From cardinal and blackbird.

It's only folk within the wood
  Can know my happiness.
I did not tell my secret, but
  I heard the robins guess;
The golden minnow knows it
  Beneath the water-cress.

FOOT-NOTES

I

This is my wrong to you, O man that I love—
  I who had all to give
And would have held back naught thereof,
  I whom love taught to live,

When you asked for a loaf of my baking,
  And a bit of blossomy spray,
Gave only these for your taking,
  And hid the rest away.

II

Behind the house is the millet plot,
And past the millet, the stile;
And then a hill where melilot
Grows with wild camomile.

There was a youth who bade me goodby
Where the hill rises to meet the sky.
I think my heart broke; but I have forgot
All but the scent of the white melilot.

III

Though you should whisper
  Of what made her weep,
She would not hear you—
  She is asleep.

Though you should taunt her
With ancient heart-break,
She would not listen—
She is awake.

Passion would find her
Too cold for dishonor.
Candles beside her,
Roses upon her!

IV

Now have I conquered that which made me sad—
The bitterness and anguish and regret.
Yes, I have conquered it. And yet—and yet—
The moaning of the doves will drive me mad.

William Ellery Leonard

INDIAN SUMMER

After completing a book for one now dead

(O earth-and-autumn of the setting sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
In the brown grasses slanting with the wind,
Lone as a lad whose dog's no longer near,
Lone as a mother whose only child has sinned,
Lone on the loved hill. . . . And below me here
The thistle-down in tremulous atmosphere
Along red clusters of the sumach streams;
The shrivelled stalks of goldenrod are sere,
And crisp and white their flashing old racemes.
(. . . forever . . . forever . . . forever . . .)
This is the lonely season of the year,
This is the season of our lonely dreams.

(O earth-and-autumn of the setting sun
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
The corn-shocks westward on the stubble plain
Show like an Indian village of dead days;

The long smoke trails behind the crawling train,
And floats atop the distant woods ablaze
With orange, crimson, purple. The low haze
Dims the scarped bluffs above the inland sea,
Whose wide and slaty waters in cold glaze
Await yon full moon on the night-to-be.
(. . . . far . . . and far . . . and far . . .)
These are the solemn horizons of man's ways,
These the horizons of solemn thought to me.

(O earth-and-autumn of the setting sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
And this the hill she visited, as friend;
And this the hill she lingered on, as bride—
Down in the yellow valley is the end:
They laid her . . . in no evening autumn tide . . .
Under fresh flowers of that May morn, beside
The queens and cave-women of ancient earth.

This is the hill . . . and over my city's towers
Across the world from sunset, yonder in air,
Shines, through its scaffoldings, a civic dome
Of piled masonry, which shall be ours
To give, completed, to our children there . . .
And yonder far roof of my abandoned home
Shall house new laughter . . . Yet I tried . . . I tried . . .
And, ever wistful of the doom to come,
I built her many a fire for love . . . for mirth . . .
(When snows were falling on our oaks outside,
Dear, many a winter fire upon the hearth) . . .
(. . . farewell . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .)
We dare not think too long on those who died,
While still so many yet must come to birth.

Maurice Leseman

A MAN WALKS IN THE WIND

Being so tired, it is hard to hide from you;
It is hard to walk any longer in the night and the wind.
I have gone among brown trees, I have crunched the blue
Frost-bitten grass under my feet, I have stood
In parted thickets, caught in the crackling leaves,
I have seen the brushpiles on the ridges fired,
I have watched the twisted smoke that weaves
Blue strands in the black branches of the wood;
And now, being tired,
Being tired now and worn enough for rest,
Would it not be safe, would it not be very good
Tonight, to find it in your breast,
In your wise breast where this is understood?

Do you remember another night of wind,
Moonlight and wind, when it was all
The sky could do to keep from reeling upon us in shame,
When, breathless, we held it there
From slipping down about us with your hair?
Do you remember a night last fall
When the wind whirled us and whetted us to flame,
And whirled the leaves and whetted us to flame,
Whipped out your dress and would not let us be,
And drove us along the prairie, two shadows clinging,
And dropped us at the foot of a tree?

That was September before the frost:
In the morning the prairie was gray with mist
And the grass was matted white where we had lain.
And the arms of the elm, the grizzled arms of the elm,
Pawed at the wind for something that was lost,
And knotted up with pain.

Fall comes to fall again,
And I walk alone, I walk alone in the wind . . . .
I cannot master the beauty of the night.
I walk alone. The poplar fingers rise
Tall and awful among white glittering stars.
Surely this is the most sorrowful delight
Of any man, to walk alone with a dream.
Do you hear the ripple singing in the stream?
The beauty of the poplars strikes me down.
The wind over the grass—I had not known
The wind was such a lonely thing.
The wind cleaves me with beauty to the bone,
And the gray clouds that brush the fields and fling
Gray darkness on to the driven prairie, and fold
Their lonely silence around the hills, and fly
On to the upper night, to the upper air—
They have beat me clear, they have beat my body cold
With beauty. Do you hear the wild geese cry?

And now the dark is heavy in my head,
And in my heart all the sorrows have come home.
I am tired—you do not know how tired I come.
You would not care tonight? You would not care,
But let your hand wander through my hair?
There would be no hurt now, we are both too tired.
I would finger the soft silk of your dress the same
As long ago, when you were first desired,
As long ago when the wind whirled us to flame.

For we know the bitter tune the wind sings;
There will be silence now, there will be rest,
And eyes will heal after the wind stings,
And I shall hear your heart under your breast
Moving across time with a great flow.
And we shall hear no more the wind's calling,
But only the silence of it falling and falling;
And always the room will throb quietly and slow.

Vachel Lindsay

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

To be sung to the tune of The Blood of the Lamb
with indicated instruments.

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
The saints smiled gravely, and they said, "He's come."
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? *Bass drums*
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug-fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail!
Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath
Unwashed legions with the ways of death—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over—Booth had groaned for more.
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang! *Banjos*
Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang,
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free!
Loons with bazoos blowing blare, blare, blare—
On, on upward through the golden air.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Booth died blind, and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God. *Bass drums slower and softer*
Booth led boldly and he looked the chief:
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

Jesus came from out the Court-House door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there — *Flutes*
Round and round the mighty Court-House square.
Yet in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole! — *Bass drums louder and faster*
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl;
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!
The hosts were sandalled and their wings were fire—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir. — *Grand chorus tambourines —all instruments in full blast*
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Oh, shout Salvation! it was good to see
Kings and princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled, and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of queens!

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer
He saw his Master through the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown — *Reverently sung—no instruments*
For Booth the soldier while the throng knelt down.
He saw King Jesus—they were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN

John P. Altgeld: Dec. 30, 1847–March 12, 1902

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.

"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.

They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.
They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you day after day;
Now you were ended. They praised you . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth—
The widow bereft of her crust, and the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor,
That should have remembered forever . . . remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call—
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones;
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons.
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began,
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name;
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

THE CONGO

A Study of the Negro Race

I—THEIR BASIC SAVAGERY

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, *A deep rolling bass*
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *More deliberate. Solemnly chanted.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
And "BLOOD!" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors, *A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket*
"BLOOD!" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors;
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM!"
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune *With a philosophic pause*
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,
Torch-eyed and horrible, *Shrilly and with a heavily accented metre*
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,

BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
Hoo, Hoo, Hoo.
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
Cutting his hands off down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
"Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, god of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

Like the wind in the chimney

All the O sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered

II—THEIR IRREPRESSIBLE HIGH SPIRITS

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall,
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
A negro fairyland swung into view,
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

Rather shrill and high

Read exactly as in first section. Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible

With pomposity

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame—
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .

With a great deliberation and ghostliness

With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp

Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm

With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"
While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, god of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
Boom."

Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

Slow philosophic calm

III—THE HOPE OF THEIR RELIGION

A good old Negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out
Starting the jubilee revival shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong,
And slammed with their hymn-books till they shook the room
With "Glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket and trance

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round,
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:
"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Exactly as in the first section. Begin with terror and power, end with joy

Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices"

Then along that river, a thousand miles,
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean;
There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed,
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue,

With growing deliberation and joy

In a rather high key—as delicately as possible

And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the Negro nation,
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices"

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you."

Dying down into a penetrating, terrified whisper

ALADDIN AND THE JINN

"Bring me soft song," said Aladdin;
"This tailor-shop sings not at all.
Chant me a word of the twilight,
Of roses that mourn in the fall.
Bring me a song like hashish
That will comfort the stale and the sad,
For I would be mending my spirit,
Forgetting these days that are bad:
Forgetting companions too shallow,
Their quarrels and arguments thin;
Forgetting the shouting muezzin."
"*I am your slave*," said the Jinn.

"Bring me old wines," said Aladdin,
"I have been a starved pauper too long.
Serve them in vessels of jade and of shell,
Serve them with fruit and with song:
Wines of pre-Adamite Sultans
Digged from beneath the black seas,

New-gathered dew from the heavens
  Dripped down from heaven's sweet trees,
Cups from the angels' pale tables
  That will make me both handsome and wise;
For I have beheld her, the Princess—
  Firelight and starlight her eyes!
Pauper I am—I would woo her.
  And . . . let me drink wine to begin,
Though the Koran expressly forbids it."
  "*I am your slave*," said the Jinn.

"Plan me a dome," said Aladdin,
  "That is drawn like the dawn of the moon,
When the sphere seems to rest on the mountains
  Half-hidden, yet full-risen soon.
Build me a dome," said Aladdin,
  "That shall cause all young lovers to sigh—
The fulness of life and of beauty,
  Peace beyond peace to the eye;
A palace of foam and of opal,
  Pure moonlight without and within,
Where I may enthrone my sweet lady."
  "*I am your slave*," said the Jinn.

THE CHINESE NIGHTINGALE

A Song in Chinese Tapestries

Dedicated to S. T. F.

"How, how," he said. "Friend Chang," I said,
"San Francisco sleeps as the dead—
Ended license, lust and play:
Why do you iron the night away?
Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round.
While the monster shadows glower and creep,
What can be better for man than sleep?"

"I will tell you a secret," Chang replied;
"My breast with vision is satisfied,

And I see green trees and fluttering wings,
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings."
Then he lit five fire-crackers in a pan.
"Pop, pop!" said the fire-crackers, "cra-cra-crack!"
He lit a joss-stick long and black.
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;
On his wrist appeared a gray small bird,
And this was the song of the gray small bird:

"Where is the princess, loved forever,
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?"

And the joss in the corner stirred again;
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,
And there on the snowy table wide
Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face . . .
Yet she put away all form and pride,
And laid her glimmering veil aside
With a childlike smile for Chang and for me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,
The table gleamed in a moonlit bower,
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,
Ironed and ironed, all alone.
And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:
"Have you forgotten . . .
Deep in the ages, long, long ago,
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand—
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?
We sold our grain in the peacock town
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown—
Built on the edge of the sea-lands brown . . .

"When all the world was drinking blood
From the skulls of men and bulls,
And all the world had swords and clubs of stone,

We drank our tea in China beneath the sacred spice-trees,
And heard the curled waves of the harbor moan.
And this gray bird, in Love's first spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
Captured the world with his carolling.
Do you remember, ages after,
At last the world we were born to own?
You were the heir of the yellow throne—
The world was the field of the Chinese man
And we were the pride of the sons of Han.
We copied deep books, and we carved in jade,
And wove white silks in the mulberry shade." . . .
"I remember, I remember
That Spring came on forever,
That Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream,
Though I saw the western street-lamps gleam,
Though dawn was bringing the western day,
Though Chang was a laundryman ironing away . . .
Mingled there with the streets and alleys,
The railroad-yard, and the clock-tower bright,
Demon-clouds crossed ancient valleys;
Across wide lotus-ponds of light
I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,
Opened her fan, closed her fan,
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and said:
"Do you remember,
Ages after,
Our palace of heart-red stone?
Do you remember
The little doll-faced children
With their lanterns full of moon-fire,
That came from all the empire
Honoring the throne?—
The loveliest fête and carnival

Our world had ever known?
The sages sat about us
With their heads bowed in their beards,
With proper meditation on the sight.
Confucius was not born;
We lived in those great days
Confucius later said were lived aright . . .
And this gray bird, on that day of spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
Captured the world with his carolling.
Late at night his tune was spent.
Peasants,
Sages,
Children,
Homeward went,
And then the bronze bird sang for you and me.
We walked alone, our hearts were high and free.
I had a silvery name, I had a silvery name,
I had a silvery name—do you remember
The name you cried beside the tumbling sea?"

Chang turned not to the lady slim—
He bent to his work, ironing away;
But she was arch and knowing and glowing.
And the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

"Darling . . . darling . . . darling . . . darling . . ."
Said the Chinese nightingale.

. . . . . .

The great gray joss on a rustic shelf,
Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,
Sang impolitely, as though by himself,
Drowning with his bellowing the nightingale's cry:
"Back through a hundred, hundred years
Hear the waves as they climb the piers,
Hear the howl of the silver seas,
Hear the thunder!
Hear the gongs of holy China

How the waves and tunes combine
In a rhythmic clashing wonder,
Incantation old and fine:
'Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons;
Red fire-crackers, and green fire-crackers,
And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons.'"

Then the lady, rosy-red,
Turned to her lover Chang and said:
"Dare you forget that turquoise dawn
When we stood in our mist-hung velvet lawn,
And worked a spell this great joss taught
Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?
From the flag high over our palace-home
He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam—
A king of beauty and tempest and thunder
Panting to tear our sorrows asunder,
A dragon of fair adventure and wonder.
We mounted the back of that royal slave
With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.
We swam down the shore of the dragon-mountains,
We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.
To our secret ivory house we were borne.
We looked down the wonderful wing-filled regions
Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.
Right by my breast the nightingale sang;
The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist
That we this hour regain—
Song-fire for the brain . . .
When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,
When you cried for your heart's new pain,
What was my name in the dragon-mist,
In the rings of rainbowed rain?"

"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.
"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:
"Dying ember, bird of Chang,
Soul of Chang, do you remember?—
Ere you returned to the shining harbor
There were pirates by ten thousand
Descended on the town
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown,
Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;
I stood upon the sand;
With lifted hand I looked upon them
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.
Deep, deep below the bay, the sea-weed and the spray,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies."

Then this did the noble lady say:
"Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day
When you flew like a courier on before
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,
And we drove the steed in your singing path—
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath;
And found our city all aglow,
And knighted this joss that decked it so?
There were golden fishes in the purple river
And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.
There were golden junks in the laughing river,
And silver junks and rainbow junks.
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,
And silver lilies and tiger-lilies;
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town
By the black-lacquer gate
Where walked in state
The kind king Chang
And his sweet-heart mate . . .
With his flag-born dragon
And his crown of pearl . . . and . . . jade;

And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,
And priests who bowed them down to your song—
By the city called Han, the peacock town,
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,
The nightingale town."

Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,
A vague, unravelling, answering tune,
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;
Sang as though for the soul of him
Who ironed away in that bower dim:

"I have forgotten
Your dragons great,
Merry and mad and friendly and bold.
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.
I vaguely know
There were heroes of old,
Troubles more than the heart could hold.
There were wolves in the woods
Yet lambs in the fold,
Nests in the top of the almond tree . . .
The evergreen tree . . . and the mulberry tree . . .
Life and hurry and joy forgotten,
Years on years I but half-remember . . .
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,
May and June, then dead December,
Dead December, then again June.
Who shall end my dream's confusion?
Life is a loom, weaving illusion . . .
I remember, I remember
There were ghostly veils and laces . . .
In the shadowy, bowery places . . .
With lovers' ardent faces
Bending to one another,
Speaking each his part.
They infinitely echo

In the red cave of my heart.
'Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart!'
They said to one another.
They spoke, I think, of perils past.
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.
One thing I remember:
Spring came on forever,
Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

THE LEADEN-EYED

Let not young souls be smothered out before
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride.
It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull,
Its poor are ox-like, limp and leaden-eyed.
Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly;
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap;
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve;
Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

In Springfield, Illinois

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight in our little town,
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down.

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards,
He lingers where his children used to play;
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones,
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl,
Make his the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why;
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come—the shining hope of Europe free:
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

HOW SAMSON BORE AWAY THE GATES OF GAZA

A Negro Sermon

Once, in a night as black as ink,
She drove him out when he would not drink.
Round the house there were men in wait
Asleep in rows by the Gaza gate.
But the Holy Spirit was in this man.
Like a gentle wind he crept and ran.
("It is midnight," said the big town clock.)

He lifted the gates up, post and lock.
The hole in the wall was high and wide
When he bore away old Gaza's pride

Into the deep of the night:
The bold Jack-Johnson Israelite—
Samson, the Judge, the Nazarite.

The air was black, like the smoke of a dragon.
Samson's heart was as big as a wagon.
He sang like a shining golden fountain;
He sweated up to the top of the mountain.
He threw down the gates with a noise like judgment.
And the quails all ran with the big arousement.

But he wept: " I must not love tough queens,
And spend on them my hard-earned means.
I told that girl I would drink no more.
Therefore she drove me from her door.
Oh, sorrow,

Sorrow,
I cannot hide!
O Lord, look down from your chariot side!
You made me Judge, and I am not wise;
I am weak as a sheep for all my size."

Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

The moon shone out, the stars were gay—
He saw the foxes run and play.
He rent his garments, he rolled around
In deep repentance on the ground.

Then he felt a honey in his soul;
Grace abounding made him whole.
Then he saw the Lord in a chariot blue.
The gorgeous stallions whinnied and flew;
The iron wheels hummed an old hymn-tune
And crunched in thunder over the moon.
And Samson shouted to the sky:
" My Lord, my Lord is riding high."

Like a steed, he pawed the gates with his hoof;
He rattled the gates like rocks on the roof,
And danced in the night
On the mountain-top;
Danced in the deep of the night—
The Judge, the holy Nazarite,
Whom ropes and chains could never bind.

Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

Whirling his arms, like a top he sped;
His long black hair flew around his head
Like an outstretched net of silky cord,
Like a wheel of the chariot of the Lord.

Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

Samson saw the sun anew.
He left the gates in the grass and dew.
He went to a county-seat a-nigh,
Found a harlot proud and high,
Philistine that no man could tame—
Delilah was her lady-name.
Oh, sorrow,
Sorrow—
She was too wise!
She cut off his hair,
She put out his eyes.

Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

JOHN BROWN

(To be sung by a leader and chorus, the leader singing the body of the poem while the chorus interrupts with the question.)

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
I saw the Ark of Noah—
It was made of pitch and pine;
I saw old Father Noah
Asleep beneath his vine;
I saw Shem, Ham and Japhet
Standing in a line;
I saw the tower of Babel
In a gorgeous sunrise shine—
By a weeping-willow tree
Beside the Dead Sea.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
I saw abominations
And Gadarene swine;
I saw the sinful Canaanites
Upon the shewbread dine,
And spoil the temple vessels
And drink the temple wine;
I saw Lot's wife, a pillar of salt
Standing in the brine—
By a weeping-willow tree
Beside the Dead Sea.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
Cedars on Mount Lebanon,
Gold in Ophir's mine,
And a wicked generation
Seeking for a sign;
And Baal's howling worshippers
Their god with leaves entwine.

And . . .
I SAW THE WAR-HORSE RAMPING
AND SHAKE HIS FORELOCK FINE—
By a weeping-willow tree
Beside the Dead Sea.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
Old John Brown,
Old John Brown.
I saw his gracious wife
Dressed in a homespun gown.
I saw his seven sons
Before his feet bow down.
And he marched with his seven sons,
His wagons and goods and guns,
To his campfire by the sea,
By the waves of Galilee.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
I saw the harp and psaltery
Played for Old John Brown.
I heard the Ram's horn blow,
Blow for Old John Brown.
I saw the Bulls of Bashan—
They cheered for Old John Brown.
I saw the big Behemoth—
He cheered for Old John Brown.
I saw the big Leviathan,
He cheered for Old John Brown.
I saw the Angel Gabriel
Great power to him assign.
I saw him fight the Canaanites
And set God's Israel free.
I saw him when the war was done
In his rustic chair recline—
By his camp-fire by the sea,
By the waves of Galilee.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
Old John Brown,
Old John Brown.
And there he sits
To judge the world.
His hunting-dogs
At his feet are curled.
His eyes half-closed,
But John Brown sees
The ends of the earth,
The Day of Doom.
AND HIS SHOT-GUN LIES
ACROSS HIS KNEES—
Old John Brown,
Old John Brown.

Haniel Long

THE HERD BOY

The night I brought the cows home
Blue mist was in the air,
And in my heart was heaven
And on my lips a prayer.

I raised my arms above me,
I stretched them wide apart,
And all the world was pressing
In beauty on my heart

The lane led by a river
Along an ancient wood,
And ancient thoughts came softly
As with the leaves they should.

I hung the cows with garlands,
And proud they walked before;
While mother-naked after
A laurel branch I bore.

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

They say that dead men tell no tales!

Except of barges with red sails,
And sailors mad for nightingales;

Except of jongleurs stretched at ease
Beside old highways through the trees;

Except of dying moons that break
The hearts of lads who lie awake;

Except of fortresses in shade,
And heroes crumbled and betrayed.

But dead men tell no tales, they say!

Except old tales that burn away
The stifling tapestries of day:

Old tales of life, of love and hate,
Of time and space, and will, and fate.

A BOOK ON ECONOMICS

Between long rows of figures lurk
Pictures of little boys at work.

And how poor women fade away
Page after page the margins say.

And in a note once in a while
I see death freeze a baby's smile.

THE CAUSE OF THIS I KNOW NOT

The cause of this I know not,
Whither they went, nor why;
But I still remember the laughter
And the bright eyes flashing by—
The day the girls were kissing
The boys who had to die.

I search in vain for the reason—
What does a poet know?—
Only that youth is lovely,
Only that youth must go;
And hearts are made to be broken,
And love is always woe.

HIS DEATHS

He bore the brunt of it so long,
And carried it off with wine and song,
The neighbors paused and raised an eye
At hearing he had learned to die.

'Twas on a Friday that he died,
But Easter day his neighbors spied
His usual figure on the streets,
And one and all were white as sheets.

"I died," said he, "on Good Friday,
And someone rolled the stone away;
And I come back to you alive
To die tonight at half past five.

"Monday at Babylon I fall,
And Tuesday on the Chinese wall;
Wednesday I die on the Thracian plain,
And Thursday evening at Compiègne.

" Saturday, Sunday, Monday too,
I die, and come to life anew;
Neighbors like Thomas look and touch,
Amazed that I can live so much."

Amy Lowell

PATTERNS

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding.
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy- booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell

Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
As I read it in the white morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."

And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown,

Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

1777

I—THE TRUMPET-VINE ARBOR

The throats of the little red trumpet-flowers are wide open,
And the clangor of brass beats against the hot sunlight.
They bray and blare at the burning sky.
Red! Red! Coarse notes of red,
Trumpeted at the blue sky.
In long streaks of sound, molten metal,
The vine declares itself.
Clang!—from its red and yellow trumpets.
Clang!—from its long, nasal trumpets,
Splitting the sunlight into ribbons, tattered and shot with noise.

I sit in the cool arbor, in a green and gold twilight.
It is very still, for I cannot hear the trumpets;
I only know that they are red and open,
And that the sun above the arbor shakes with heat.
My quill is newly mended,
And makes fine-drawn lines with its point.
Down the long white paper it makes little lines,
Just lines—up—down—criss-cross.
My heart is strained out at the pin-point of my quill;
It is thin and writhing like the marks of the pen.
My hand marches to a squeaky tune,
It marches down the paper to a squealing of fifes.
My pen and the trumpet-flowers,
And Washington's armies away over the smoke-tree to the south-west.
Yankee Doodle, my darling! It is you against the British,

Marching in your ragged shoes to batter down King George.
What have you got in your hat? Not a feather, I wager.
Just a hay-straw, for it is the harvest you are fighting for.
Hay in your hat, and the whites of their eyes for a target!
Like Bunker Hill, two years ago, when I watched all day from the housetop,
Through father's spy-glass,
The red city, and the blue, bright water,
And puffs of smoke which you made.
Twenty miles away,
Round my Cambridge, or over the Neck,
But the smoke was white—white!
Today the trumpet-flowers are red—red—
And I cannot see you fighting;
But old Mr. Dimond has fled to Canada,
And Myra sings *Yankee Doodle* at her milking.

The red throats of the trumpets bray and clang in the sunshine,
And the smoke-tree puffs dun blossoms into the blue air.

II—THE CITY OF FALLING LEAVES

Leaves fall,
Brown leaves,
Yellow leaves streaked with brown.
They fall,
Flutter,
Fall again.
The brown leaves,
And the streaked yellow leaves,
Loosen on their branches
And drift slowly downwards.
One,
One, two, three,
One, two, five.
All Venice is a falling of autumn leaves,
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.
"That sonnet, *Abate*,
Beautiful,

I am quite exhausted by it.
Your phrases turn about my heart,
And stifle me to swooning.
Open the window, I beg.
Lord! What a strumming of fiddles and mandolins!
'Tis really a shame to stop indoors.
Call my maid, or I will make you lace me yourself.
Fie, how hot it is, not a breath of air!
See how straight the leaves are falling.
Marianna, I will have the yellow satin caught up with silver fringe,
It peeps out delightfully from under a mantle.
Am I well painted to-day, *caro Abate mio?*
You will be proud of me at the Ridotto, hey?
Proud of being *cavalier servente* to such a lady?"
"Can you doubt it, *bellissima Contessa?*
A pinch more rouge on the right cheek,
And Venus herself shines less . . ."
"You bore me, *Abate;*
I vow I must change you!
A letter, Achmet?
Run and look out of the window, *Abate.*
I will read my letter in peace."

The little black slave with the yellow satin turban
Gazes at his mistress with strained eyes.
His yellow turban and black skin
Are gorgeous—barbaric.
The yellow satin dress with its silver flashings
Lies on a chair
Beside a black mantle and a black mask.
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
The lady reads her letter,
And the leaves drift slowly
Past the long windows.
"How silly you look, my dear *Abate,*
With that great brown leaf in your wig.
Pluck it off, I beg you,
Or I shall die of laughing."

A yellow wall,
Aflare in the sunlight,
Chequered with shadows,
Shadows of vine-leaves,
Shadows of masks.
Masks coming, printing themselves for an instant,
Then passing on,
More masks always replacing them.
Masks with tricorns and rapiers sticking out behind,
Pursuing masks with plumes and high heels,
The sunlight shining under their insteps.
One,
One, two,
One, two, three—
There is a thronging of shadows on the hot wall,
Filigreed at the top with moving leaves.
Yellow sunlight and black shadows,
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
Two masks stand together,
And the shadow of a leaf falls through them,
Marking the wall where they are not.
From hat-tip to shoulder-tip,
From elbow to sword-hilt,
The leaf falls.
The shadows mingle,
Blur together,
Slide along the wall and disappear.
Gold of mosaics and candles,
And night blackness lurking in the ceiling beams.
Saint Mark's glitters with flames and reflections.
A cloak brushes aside,
And the yellow of satin
Licks out over the colored inlays of the pavement.
Under the gold crucifixes
There is a meeting of hands
Reaching from black mantles.
Sighing embraces, bold investigations,
Hide in confessionals,

Sheltered by the shuffling of feet.
Gorgeous—barbaric
In its mail of jewels and gold,
Saint Mark's looks down at the swarm of black masks;
And outside in the palace gardens brown leaves fall,
Flutter,
Fall,
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.

Blue-black, the sky over Venice,
With a pricking of yellow stars.
There is no moon,
And the waves push darkly against the prow
Of the gondola,
Coming from Malamocco
And streaming toward Venice.
It is black under the gondola hood,
But the yellow of a satin dress
Glares out like the eye of a watching tiger.
Yellow compassed about with darkness,
Yellow and black,
Gorgeous—barbaric.
The boatman sings,
It is Tasso that he sings;
The lovers seek each other beneath their mantles,
And the gondola drifts over the lagoon, aslant to the coming dawn.
But at Malamocco in front,
In Venice behind,
Fall the leaves,
Brown,
And yellow streaked with brown.
They fall,
Flutter,
Fall.

VENUS TRANSIENS

Tell me,
Was Venus more beautiful
Than you are,
When she topped
The crinkled waves,
Drifting shoreward
On her plaited shell?
Was Botticelli's vision
Fairer than mine,
And were the painted rosebuds
He tossed his lady
Of better worth
Than the words I blow about you
To cover your too great loveliness
As with a gauze
Of misted silver?

For me,
You stand poised
In the blue and buoyant air,
Cinctured by bright winds,
Treading the sunlight.
And the waves which precede you
Ripple and stir
The sands at my feet.

A LADY

You are beautiful and faded,
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord;
Or like the sun-flooded silks
Of an eighteenth-century boudoir.
In your eyes
Smoulder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,
And the perfume of your soul

Is vague and suffusing,
With the pungence of sealed spice jars.
Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet.
Gather it up from the dust,
That its sparkle may amuse you.

CHINOISERIES

REFLECTIONS

When I looked into your eyes,
I saw a garden
With peonies, and tinkling pagodas,
And round-arched bridges
Over still lakes.
A woman sat beside the water
In a rain-blue, silken garment.
She reached through the water
To pluck the crimson peonies
Beneath the surface,
But as she grasped the stems,
They jarred and broke into white-green ripples;
And as she drew out her hand,
The water-drops dripping from it
Stained her rain-blue dress like tears.

FALLING SNOW

The snow whispers about me,
And my wooden clogs
Leave holes behind me in the snow.
But no one will pass this way
Seeking my footsteps,
And when the temple bell rings again
They will be covered and gone.

HOAR-FROST

In the cloud-gray mornings
I heard the herons flying;
And when I came into my garden,
My silken outer-garment
Trailed over withered leaves.
A dried leaf crumbles at a touch,
But I have seen many Autumns
With herons blowing like smoke
Across the sky.

SOLITAIRE

When night drifts along the streets of the city,
And sifts down between the uneven roofs,
My mind begins to peek and peer.
It plays at ball in old, blue Chinese gardens,
And shakes wrought dice-cups in Pagan temples,
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.
It dances with purple and yellow crocuses in its hair,
And its feet shine as they flutter over drenched grasses.
How light and laughing my mind is,
When all the good folk have put out their bed-room candles,
And the city is still!

A GIFT

See! I give myself to you, Beloved!
My words are little jars
For you to take and put upon a shelf.
Their shapes are quaint and beautiful,
And they have many pleasant colors and lustres
To recommend them.
Also the scent from them fills the room
With sweetness of flowers and crushed grasses.

When I shall have given you the last one
You will have the whole of me,
But I shall be dead.

RED SLIPPERS

Red slippers in a shop-window; and outside in the street, flaws of gray, windy sleet!

Behind the polished glass the slippers hang in long threads of red, festooning from the ceiling like stalactites of blood, flooding the eyes of passers-by with dripping color, jamming their crimson reflections against the windows of cabs and tram-cars, screaming their claret and salmon into the teeth of the sleet, plopping their little round maroon lights upon the tops of umbrellas.

The row of white, sparkling shop-fronts is gashed and bleeding, it bleeds red slippers. They spout under the electric light, fluid and fluctuating, a hot rain—and freeze again to red slippers, myriadly multiplied in the mirror side of the window.

They balance upon arched insteps like springing bridges of crimson lacquer; they swing up over curved heels like whirling tanagers sucked in a wind-pocket; they flatten out, heelless, like July ponds, flared and burnished by red rockets.

Snap, snap, they are cracker sparks of scarlet in the white, monotonous block of shops.

They plunge the clangor of billions of vermilion trumpets into the crowd outside, and echo in faint rose over the pavement.

People hurry by, for these are only shoes, and in a window farther down is a big lotus bud of cardboard, whose petals open every few minutes and reveal a wax doll, with staring bead eyes and flaxen hair, lolling awkwardly in its flower chair.

One has often seen shoes, but whoever saw a cardboard lotus bud before?

The flaws of gray, windy sleet beat on the shop-window where there are only red slippers.

APOLOGY

Be not angry with me that I bear
  Your colors everywhere,
  All through each crowded street,
    And meet
  The wonder-light in every eye,
    As I go by.

Each plodding wayfarer looks up to gaze,
  Blinded by rainbow-haze,
  The stuff of happiness,
    No less,
  Which wraps me in its glad-hued folds
    Of peacock golds.

Before my feet the dusty, rough-paved way
  Flushes beneath its gray.
  My steps fall ringed with light,
    So bright
  It seems a myriad suns are strown
    About the town.

Around me is the sound of steepled bells,
  And rich perfumed smells
  Hang like a wind-forgotten cloud,
    And shroud
  Me from close contact with the world.
    I dwell, impearled.

You blazon me with jewelled insignia.
  A flaming nebula
  Rims in my life. And yet
    You set
  The word upon me, unconfessed,
    To go unguessed.

MEETING-HOUSE HILL

I must be mad, or very tired,
When the curve of a blue bay beyond a railroad track
Is shrill and sweet to me like the sudden springing of a tune,
And the sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire
Is cool, and candid,
Rising into an unresisting sky.
Strange meeting-house
Pausing a moment upon a squalid hill-top.
I watch the spire sweeping the sky,
I am dizzy with the movement of the sky,
I might be watching a mast
With its royals set full
Straining before a two-reef breeze.
I might be sighting a tea-clipper,
Tacking into the blue bay,
Just back from Canton
With her hold full of green and blue porcelain
And a Chinese coolie leaning over the rail
Gazing at the white spire
With dull, sea spent eyes.

OMBRE CHINOISE

Red foxgloves against a yellow wall streaked with plum-colored
shadows;
A lady with a blue and red sunshade;
The slow dash of waves upon a parapet.
That is all.
Non-existent—immortal—
As solid as the centre of a ring of fine gold.

NIGHT CLOUDS

The white mares of the moon rush along the sky
Beating their golden hoofs upon the glass heavens;
The white mares of the moon are all standing on their hind legs
Pawing at the green porcelain doors of the remote heavens.
Fly, mares!
Strain your utmost,
Scatter the milky dust of stars,
Or the tiger sun will leap upon you and destroy you
With one lick of his vermilion tongue.

THE GARDEN BY MOONLIGHT

A black cat among roses,
Phlox, lilac-misted under a first-quarter moon,
The sweet smells of heliotrope and night-scented stock.
The garden is very still;
It is dazed with moonlight,
Contented with perfume,
Dreaming the opium dreams of its folded poppies.
Firefly lights open and vanish,
High as the tip buds of the golden glow,
Low as the sweet alyssum flowers at my feet.
Moon-shimmer on leaves and trellises,
Moon-spikes shafting through the snow-ball bush.
Only the little faces of the ladies' delight are alert and staring;
Only the cat, padding between the roses,
Shakes a branch and breaks the chequered pattern
As water is broken by the falling of a leaf.
Then you come,
And you are quiet like the garden,
And white like the alyssum flowers,
And beautiful as the silent sparks of the fireflies.
Ah, Beloved, do you see those orange lilies?
They knew my mother,
But who belonging to me will they know
When I am gone?

FOUR SIDES TO A HOUSE

Peter, Peter, along the ground,
Is it wind I hear, or your shoes' sound?
Peter, Peter, across the air,
Do dead leaves fall, or is it your hair?
Peter, Peter, North and South,
They have stopped your mouth
With water, Peter.

The long road runs, and the long road runs,
  Who comes over the long road, Peter?
Who knocks at the door in the cold twilight,
And begs a heap of straw for the night,
And a bit of a sup, and a bit of a bite—
  Do you know the face, Peter?

He lays him down on the floor and sleeps.
  Must you wind the clock, Peter?
It will strike and strike the dark night through.
He will sleep past one, he will sleep past two,
But when it strikes three what will he do?
  He will rise and kill you, Peter.

He will open the door to one without.
  Do you hear that voice, Peter?
Two men prying and poking about—
Is it here, is it there, is it in, is it out?
Cover his staring eyes with a clout.
  But you're dead, dead, Peter.

They have ripped up the boards, they have pried up the stones,
  They have found your gold, dead Peter.
Ripe red coins to itch a thief's hand,
But you drip ripe red on the floor's white sand,
You burn their eyes like a firebrand.
  They must quench you, Peter.

It is dark in the North, it is dark in the South.
  The wind blows your white hair, Peter.
One at your feet and one at your head.
A soft bed, a smooth bed,
Scarcely a splash, you sink like lead.
  Sweet water in your well, Peter.

Along the road and along the road,
  The next house, Peter.
Four-square to the bright and the shade of the moon.
The North winds shuffle, the South winds croon,
Water with white hair over-strewn.
  The door, the door, Peter!
Water seeps under the door.

They have risen up in the morning grey.
  What will they give to Peter?
The sorrel horse with the tail of gold,
Fastest pacer ever was foaled.
Shoot him, skin him, blanch his bones,
Nail up his skull with a silver nail
Over the door, it will not fail.
No ghostly thing can ever prevail
  Against a horse's skull, Peter.

Over the lilacs, gazing down,
  Is a window, Peter.
The north winds call, and the south winds cry.
Silver white hair in a bitter blowing,
Eel-green water washing by,
A red mouth floating and flowing.
  Do you come, Peter?

They rose as the last star sank and set.
  One more for Peter.
They slew the black mare at the flush of the sun,
And nailed her skull to the window-stone.
In the light of the moon how white it shone—
  And your breathing mouth, Peter!

Around the house, and around the house,
With a wind that is North, and a wind that is South,
  Peter, Peter.
Mud and ooze and a dead man's wrist
Wrenching the shutters apart, like mist
The mud and the ooze and the dead man twist.
    They are praying, Peter.

Three in stable a week ago.
  This is the last, Peter.
" My strawberry roan in the morning clear,
Lady heart and attentive ear,
Foot like a kitten, nose like a deer,
But the fear! The fear! "
  Three skulls, Peter.

The sun goes down, and the night draws in.
  Toward the hills, Peter.
What lies so stiff on the hill-room floor,
When the gusty wind claps to the door?
They have paid three horses and two men more.
  Gather your gold, Peter.

Softly, softly, along the ground
Lest your shoes sound.
Gently, gently, across the air
Lest it stream, your hair.
North and South
For your aching mouth.
But the moon is old, Peter,
And death is long, and the well is deep.
Can you sleep, sleep, Peter?

Percy Mackaye

OLD AGE

Old Age, the irrigator,
Digs our bosoms straighter,
More workable and deeper still
To turn the ever-running mill
Of nights and days. He makes a trough
To drain our passions off,
That used so beautiful to lie
Variegated to the sky,
On waste moorlands of the heart—
Haunts of idleness, and art
Still half-dreaming. All their piedness,
Rank and wild and shallow wideness,
Desultory splendors, he
Straightens conscientiously
To a practicable sluice
Meant for workaday plain use.
All the mists of early dawn,
Twilit marshes, being gone
With their glamour, and their stench,
There is left—a narrow trench.

SONG FROM "MATER"

Long ago, in the young moonlight,
I lost my heart to a hero;
Strong and tender and stern and right,
Darker than night,
And terribler than Nero.
Heigh, but he was dear, O!

And there, to bind our fellowship,
I laughed at him; and a moment after,
I laughed again till he bit his lip,
For the test of love is laughter.

" Lord and master, look up! " I cried;
" I wreathe your brow with a laurel!
Gloom and wisdom and right and pride
Cast them aside,
And kiss, and cure our quarrel.
Never mind the moral! "

Alas! with strange and saddened eyes
He looked on me; and my mirth grew dafter,
To feel the flush of his dark surprise;
For the zest of love is laughter.

Long ago, in the old moonlight,
I lost my hero and lover;
Strong and tender and stern and right,
Never shall night
Nor day his brow uncover.
Ah, my heart, that is over!

Yet still, for joy of the fellowship
That bound us both through the years long after,
I laugh to think how he bit his lip;
For the test of love—
And the best of love—is laughter.

Frederic Manning

SACRIFICE

Love suffereth all things.
And we,
Out of the travail and pain of our striving,
Bring unto Thee the perfect prayer:
For the heart of no man uttereth love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

For us no splendid apparel of pageantry—
Burnished breast-plates, scarlet banners, and trumpets
Sounding exultantly.

But the mean things of the earth hast Thou chosen,
Decked them with suffering;
Made them beautiful with the passion for rightness,
Strong with the pride of love.

Yea, though our praise of Thee slayeth us,
Yet love shall exalt us beside Thee triumphant,
Dying, that these live;
And the earth again be beautiful with orchards,
Yellow with wheatfields;
And the lips of others praise Thee, though our lips
Be stopped with earth, and songless.

But we shall have brought Thee their praises,
Brought unto Thee the perfect prayer:
For the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

O God of sorrows,
Whose feet come softly through the dews,
Stoop Thou unto us,
For we die so Thou livest,
Our hearts the cups of Thy vintage:
And the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

AT EVEN

Hush ye! Hush ye! My babe is sleeping.
Hush, ye winds, that are full of sorrow!
Hush, ye rains, from your weary weeping!
Give him slumber until to-morrow.

Hush ye, yet! In the years hereafter,
Surely sorrow is all his reaping;
Tears shall be in the place of laughter,
Give him peace for a while in sleeping.

Hush ye, hush! he is weak and ailing:
Send his mother his share of weeping.
Hush ye, winds, from your endless wailing;
Hush ye, hush ye, my babe is sleeping!

THE SIGN

From the trenches

We are here in a wood of little beeches;
And the leaves are like black lace
Against a sky of nacre.

One bough of clear promise
Across the moon.

It is in this wise that God speaketh unto me.
He layeth hands of healing upon my flesh,
Stilling it in an eternal peace;
Until my soul reaches out myriad and infinite hands
Toward him,
And is eased of its hunger.

And I know that this passes—
This implacable fury and torment of men—
As a thing insensate and vain.
And the stillness hath said unto me,
Over the tumult of sounds and shaken flame,
Out of the terrible beauty of wrath,
I alone am eternal.

One bough of clear promise
Across the moon.

John Masefield

SHIPS

I cannot tell their wonder nor make known
Magic that once thrilled through me to the bone;
But all men praise some beauty, tell some tale,
Vent a high mood which makes the rest seem pale,
Pour their heart's blood to flourish one green leaf,
Follow some Helen for her gift of grief,
And fail in what they mean, whate'er they do:
You should have seen, man cannot tell to you
The beauty of the ships of that my city.
That beauty now is spoiled by the sea's pity;
For one may haunt the pier a score of times,
Hearing St. Nicholas bells ring out the chimes,
Yet never see those proud ones swaying home
With mainyards backed and bows a cream of foam,
Those bows so lovely-curving, cut so fine,
Those coulters of the many-bubbled brine—
As once, long since, when all the docks were filled
With that sea-beauty man has ceased to build.

Yet, though their splendor may have ceased to be,
Each played her sovereign part in making me;
Now I return my thanks with heart and lips
For the great queenliness of all those ships.

And first the first bright memory, still so clear,
An autumn evening in a golden year,
When in the last lit moments before dark
The *Chepica*, a steel-gray lovely barque,
Came to an anchor near us on the flood,
Her trucks aloft in sun-glow red as blood.

Then come so many ships that I could fill
Three docks with their fair hulls remembered still,
Each with her special memory's special grace,

Riding the sea, making the waves give place
To delicate high beauty; man's best strength,
Noble in every line in all their length.
Ailsa, *Genista*, ships with long jibbooms,
The *Wanderer* with great beauty and strange dooms,
Liverpool (mightiest then) superb, sublime,
The *California* huge, as slow as time.
The *Copley* swift, the perfect *J. T. North*,
The loveliest barque my city has sent forth,
Dainty *John Lockett* well remembered yet,
The splendid *Argus* with her skysail set,
Stalwart *Drumcliff*, white-blocked, majestic *Sierras*,
Divine bright ships, the water's standard-bearers;
Melpomene, *Euphrosyne*, and their sweet
Sea-troubling sisters of the Fernie fleet;
Corunna (in whom my friend died) and the old
Long since loved *Esmeralda* long since sold.
Centurion passed in Rio, *Glaucus* spoken,
Aladdin burnt, the *Bidston* water-broken,
Yola, in whom my friend sailed, *Dawpool* trim,
Fierce-bowed *Egeria* plunging to the swim,
Stanmore wide-sterned, sweet *Cupica*, tall *Bard*,
Queen in all harbors with her moon-sail yard.

Though I tell many, there must still be others,
McVickar Marshall's ships and Fernie Brothers',
Lochs, *Counties*, *Shires*, *Drums*, the countless lines
Whose house-flags all were once familiar signs
At high main-trucks on Mersey's windy ways
When sunlight made the wind-white water blaze.
Their names bring back old mornings, when the docks
Shone with their house-flags and their painted blocks,
Their raking masts below the Custom House
And all the marvellous beauty of their bows.

Familiar steamers, too, majestic steamers,
Shearing Atlantic roller-tops to streamers,
Umbria, *Etruria*, noble, still at sea,
The grandest, then, that man had brought to be.

Majestic, City of Paris, City of Rome,
Forever jealous racers, out and home.
The *Alfred Holt's* blue smoke-stacks down the stream,
The fair *Loanda* with her bows a-cream.
Booth liners, Anchor liners, Red Star liners,
The marks and styles of countless ship-designers,
The *Magdalena, Puno, Potosi,*
Lost *Cotopaxi,* all well known to me.

These splendid ships, each with her grace, her glory,
Her memory of old song or comrade's story,
Still in my mind the image of life's need,
Beauty in hardest action, beauty indeed.
" They built great ships and sailed them " sounds most brave,
Whatever arts we have or fail to have.
I touch my country's mind, I come to grips
With half her purpose, thinking of these ships:
That art untouched by softness, all that line
Drawn ringing hard to stand the test of brine;
That nobleness and grandeur, all that beauty
Born of a manly life and bitter duty;
That splendor of fine bows which yet could stand
The shock of rollers never checked by land;
That art of masts, sail-crowded, fit to break,
Yet stayed to strength and backstayed into rake;
The life demanded by that art, the keen
Eye-puckered, hard-case seamen, silent, lean.
They are grander things than all the art of towns;
Their tests are tempests and the sea that drowns.
They are my country's line, her great art done
By strong brains laboring on the thought unwon.
They mark our passage as a race of men—
Earth will not see such ships as those again.

CARGOES

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

WATCHING BY A SICK-BED

I heard the wind all day,
And what it was trying to say.
I heard the wind all night
Rave as it ran to fight;
After the wind the rain,
And then the wind again
Running across the hill
As it runs still.

And all day long the sea
Would not let the land be,
But all night heaped her sand
On to the land.
I saw her glimmer white
All through the night,

Tossing the horrid hair
Still tossing there.

And all day long the stone
Felt how the wind was blown;
And all night long the rock
Stood the sea's shock;
While, from the window, I
Looked out, and wondered why,
Why at such length
Such force should fight such strength.

WHAT AM I, LIFE?

What am I, life? A thing of watery salt
Held in cohesion by unresting cells,
Which work they know not why, which never halt,
Myself unwitting where their Master dwells.
I do not bid them, yet they toil, they spin
A world which uses me as I use them;
Nor do I know which end or which begin
Nor which to praise, which pamper, which condemn.
So, like a marvel in a marvel set,
I answer to the vast, as wave by wave
The sea of air goes over, dry or wet,
Or the full moon comes swimming from her cave,
Or the great sun comes forth: this myriad I
Tingles, not knowing how, yet wondering why.

THE PASSING STRANGE

Out of the earth to rest or range
Perpetual in perpetual change—
The unknown passing through the strange.

Water and saltness held together
To tread the dust and stand the weather
And plough the field and stretch the tether.

To pass the wine-cup and be witty,
Water the sands and build the city,
Slaughter like devils and have pity;

Be red with rage and pale with lust,
Make beauty come, make peace, make trust—
Water and saltness mixed with dust;

Drive over earth, swim under sea,
Fly in the eagle's secrecy,
Guess where the hidden comets be;

Know all the deathy seeds that still
Queen Helen's beauty, Caesar's will,
And slay them even as they kill;

Fashion an altar for a rood,
Defile a continent with blood,
And watch a brother starve for food;

Love like a madman, shaking, blind,
Till self is burnt into a kind
Possession of another mind;

Brood upon beauty till the grace
Of beauty with the holy face
Brings peace into the bitter place;

Probe in the lifeless granites, scan
The stars for hope, for guide, for plan;
Live as a woman or a man;

Fasten to lover or to friend
Until the heart-break at the end,
The break of death that cannot mend;

Then to lie useless, helpless, still;
Down in the earth, in dark, to fill
The roots of grass or daffodil.

Down in the earth, in dark, alone,
A mockery of the ghost in bone,
The strangeness passing the unknown.

Time will go by, that outlasts clocks,
Dawn in the thorps will rouse the cocks,
Sunset be glory on the rocks;

But it, the thing, will never heed
Even the rootling from the seed
Thrusting to suck it for its need.

Since moons decay and suns decline
How else should end this life of mine?
Water and saltness are not wine.

But in the darkest hour of night,
When even the foxes peer for sight,
The byre-cock crows; he feels the light.

So, in this water mixed with dust,
The byre-cock spirit crows from trust
That death will change because it must;

For all things change—the darkness changes,
The wandering spirits change their ranges,
The corn is gathered to the granges.

The corn is sown again, it grows;
The stars burn out, the darkness goes.
The rhythms change, they do not close.

They change; and we, who pass like foam,
Like dust blown through the streets of Rome,
Change ever too; we have no home,

Only a beauty, only a power,
Sad in the fruit, bright in the flower,
Endlessly erring for its hour,

But gathering, as we stray, a sense
Of Life, so lovely and intense,
It lingers when we wander hence,

That those who follow feel behind
Their backs, when all before is blind,
Our joy, a rampart to the mind.

THE FRONTIER

Persons: Cotta, Lucius, their Chief

Cotta. Would God the route would come for home.
My God—this place, day after day,
A month of heavy march from Rome!
This camp, the troopers' huts of clay,
The horses tugging at their pins,
The roaring brook, and then the whins,
And nothing new to do or say.
Lucius. They say the tribes are up.
Cotta. Who knows?
Lucius. Our scouts say that they saw their fires.
Cotta. Well, if we fight it's only blows,
And bogging horses in the mires.
Lucius. Their raiders crossed the line last night,
Eastward from this, to raid the stud.
They stole our old chief's stallion, Kite.
He's in pursuit.
Cotta. That looks like blood.
Lucius. Well, better that than dicing here
Beside this everlasting stream.
Cotta. My God! I was in Rome last year,
Under the sun—it seems a dream.
Lucius. Things are not going well in Rome;
This frontier war is wasting men
Like water, and the Tartars come
In hordes.
Cotta. We beat them back again.
Lucius. So far we have, and yet I feel

The Empire is too wide a bow
For one land's strength.
Cotta. The stuff's good steel.
Lucius. Too great a strain may snap it though.
If we were ordered home. . . .
Cotta. Good Lord . . .
Lucius. If . . . Then our friends, the tribesmen there
Would have glad days.
Cotta. This town would flare
To warm old Foxfoot and his horde.
Lucius. We have not been forethoughtful here.
Pressing the men to fill the ranks,
Centurions sweep the province clear.
Cotta. Rightly.
Lucius. Perhaps.
Cotta. We get no thanks.
Lucius. We strip the men for troops abroad,
And leave the women and the slaves
For merchants and their kind. The graves
Of half each province line the road.
These people could not stand a day
Against the tribes, with us away.
Cotta. Rightly.
Lucius. Perhaps.
Cotta. Here comes the Chief.
Lucius. Sir, did your riders catch the thief?
Chief. No, he got clear and keeps the horse.
But bad news always comes with worse:
The frontier's fallen, we're recalled,
Our army's broken, Rome's appalled—
My God, the whole world's in a blaze!
So now we've done with idle days,
Fooling on frontiers. Boot and start.
It gives a strange feel in the heart
To think that this, that Rome has made,
Is done with. Yes, the stock's decayed.
We march at once. You mark my words—
We're done, we're crumbled into sherds,
We shall not see this place again

When once we go.
Lucius. Do none remain?
Chief. No, none, all march. Here ends the play.
March, and burn camp. The order's gone—
Your men have sent your baggage on.
Cotta. My God, hark how the trumpets bray!
Chief. They do. You see the end of things.
The power of a thousand kings
Helped us to this, and now the power
Is so much hay that was a flower.
Lucius. We have been very great and strong.
Chief. That's over now.
Lucius. It will be long
Before the world will see our like.
Chief. We've kept these thieves beyond the dyke
A good long time, here on the Wall.
Lucius. Colonel, we ought to sound a call
To mark the end of this.
Chief. We ought.
Look—there's the hill-top where we fought
Old Foxfoot. Look—there in the whin.
Old ruffian knave! Come on. Fall in.

Edgar Lee Masters

SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

THE HILL

Where are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozer, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for her heart's desire,
One after life in far-away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and Mag—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution —
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

MOLLIE MCGEE

Have you seen walking through the village
A man with downcast eyes and haggard face?
That is my husband who, by secret cruelty
Never to be told, robbed me of my youth and my beauty;

Till at last, wrinkled and with yellow teeth,
And with broken pride and shameful humility,
I sank into the grave.
But what think you gnaws at my husband's heart?
The face of what I was, the face of what he made me!
These are driving him to the place where I lie.
In death, therefore, I am avenged.

DAISY FRASER

Did you ever hear of Editor Whedon
Giving to the public treasury any of the money he received
For supporting candidates for office?
Or for writing up the canning factory
To get people to invest?
Or for suppressing the facts about the bank,
When it was rotten and ready to break?
Did you ever hear of the Circuit Judge
Helping anyone except the "Q" railroad,
Or the bankers? Or did Rev. Peet or Rev. Sibley
Give any part of their salary, earned by keeping still,
Or speaking out as the leaders wished them to do,
To the building of the water works?
But I—Daisy Fraser, who always passed
Along the streets through rows of nods and smiles,
And coughs and words such as "there she goes,"
Never was taken before Justice Arnett
Without contributing ten dollars and costs
To the school fund of Spoon River!

HARE DRUMMER

Do the boys and girls still go to Siever's
For cider, after school, in late September?
Or gather hazel nuts among the thickets
On Aaron Hatfield's farm when the frosts begin?
For many times with the laughing girls and boys
Played I along the road and over the hills
When the sun was low and the air was cool,
Stopping to club the walnut tree

Standing leafless against a flaming west.
Now, the smell of the autumn smoke,
And the dropping acorns,
And the echoes about the vales
Bring dreams of life. They hover over me.
They question me:
Where are those laughing comrades?
How many are with me, how many
In the old orchards along the way to Siever's,
And in the woods that overlook
The quiet water?

DOC HILL

I went up and down the streets
Here and there by day and night,
Through all hours of the night caring for the poor who were sick.
Do you know why?
My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs.
And I turned to the people and poured out my love to them.
Sweet it was to see the crowds about the lawns on the day of my funeral,
And hear them murmur their love and sorrow.
But oh, dear God, my soul trembled, scarcely able
To hold to the railing of the new life
When I saw Em Stanton behind the oak tree
At the grave,
Hiding herself, and her grief!

FIDDLER JONES

The earth keeps some vibration going
There in your heart, and that is you.
And if the people find you can fiddle,
Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.
What do you see, a harvest of clover?
Or a meadow to walk through to the river?
The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands
For beeves hereafter ready for market;
Or else you hear the rustle of skirts
Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.

To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust
Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;
They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy
Stepping it off, to "Toor-a-Loor."
How could I till my forty acres
Not to speak of getting more,
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos
Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
And the creak of a wind-mill—only these?
And I never started to plow in my life
That some one did not stop in the road
And take me away to a dance or picnic.
I ended up with forty acres;
I ended up with a broken fiddle—
And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
And not a single regret.

THOMAS RHODES

Very well, you liberals,
And navigators into realms intellectual,
You sailors through heights imaginative,
Blown about by erratic currents, tumbling into air pockets,
You Margaret Fuller Slacks, Petits,
And Tennessee Claflin Shopes—
You found with all your boasted wisdom
How hard at the last it is
To keep the soul from splitting into cellular atoms.
While we, seekers of earth's treasures,
Getters and hoarders of gold,
Are self-contained, compact, harmonized,
Even to the end.

EDITOR WHEDON

To be able to see every side of every question;
To be on every side, to be everything, to be nothing long;
To pervert truth, to ride it for a purpose,
To use great feelings and passions of the human family
For base designs, for cunning ends,
To wear a mask like the Greek actors—
Your eight-page paper—behind which you huddle,

Bawling through the megaphone of big type:
"This is I, the giant."
Thereby also living the life of a sneak-thief,
Poisoned with the anonymous words
Of your clandestine soul.
To scratch dirt over scandal for money,
And exhume it to the winds for revenge,
Or to sell papers
Crushing reputations, or bodies, if need be,
To win at any cost, save your own life.
To glory in demoniac power, ditching civilization,
As a paranoiac boy puts a log on the track
And derails the express train.
To be an editor, as I was—
Then to lie here close by the river over the place
Where the sewage flows from the village,
And the empty cans and garbage are dumped,
And abortions are hidden.

SETH COMPTON

When I died, the circulating library
Which I built up for Spoon River,
And managed for the good in inquiring minds,
Was sold at auction on the public square,
As if to destroy the last vestige
Of my memory and influence.
For those of you who could not see the virtue
Of knowing Volney's *Ruins* as well as Butler's *Analogy*
And *Faust* as well as *Evangeline*,
Were really the power in the village,
And often you asked me,
"What is the use of knowing the evil in the world?"
I am out of your way now, Spoon River—
Choose your own good and call it good.
For I could never make you see
That no one knows what is good
Who knows not what is evil;
And no one knows what is true
Who knows not what is false.

HENRY C. CALHOUN

I reached the highest place in Spoon River,
But through what bitterness of spirit!
The face of my father, sitting speechless,
Child-like, watching his canaries,
And looking at the court-house window
Of the county judge's room,
And his admonitions to me to seek
My own life, and punish Spoon River
To avenge the wrong the people did him,
Filled me with furious energy
To seek for wealth and seek for power.
But what did he do but send me along
The path that leads to the grove of the Furies?
I followed the path and I tell you this:
On the way to the grove you'll pass the Fates,
Shadow-eyed, bent over their weaving.
Stop for a moment, and if you see
The thread of revenge leap out of the shuttle
Then quickly snatch from Atropos
The shears and cut it, lest your sons,
And the children of them and their children
Wear the envenomed robe.

PERRY ZOLL

My thanks, friends of the County Scientific Association,
For this modest boulder,
And its little tablet of bronze.
Twice I tried to join your honored body,
And was rejected,
And when my little brochure
On the intelligence of plants
Began to attract attention
You almost voted me in.
After that I grew beyond the need of you
And your recognition.
Yet I do not reject your memorial stone,
Seeing that I should, in so doing,
Deprive you of honor to yourselves.

ARCHIBALD HIGBIE

I loathed you, Spoon River. I tried to rise above you,
I was ashamed of you. I despised you
As the place of my nativity.
And there in Rome, among the artists,
Speaking Italian, speaking French,
I seemed to myself at times to be free
Of every trace of my origin.
I seemed to be reaching the heights of art
And to breathe the air that the masters breathed,
And to see the world with their eyes.
But still they'd pass my work and say:
"What are you driving at, my friend?
Sometimes the face looks like Apollo's,
At others it has a trace of Lincoln's."
There was no culture, you know, in Spoon River,
And I burned with shame and held my peace.
And what could I do, all covered over
And weighted down with western soil,
Except aspire, and pray for another
Birth in the world, with all of Spoon River
Rooted out of my soul?

FATHER MALLOY

You are over there, Father Malloy,
Where holy ground is, and the cross marks every grave,
Not here with us on the hill—
Us of wavering faith, and clouded vision
And drifting hope, and unforgiven sins.
You were so human, Father Malloy,
Taking a friendly glass sometimes with us,
Siding with us who would rescue Spoon River
From the coldness and the dreariness of village morality.
You were like a traveler who brings a little box of sand
From the wastes about the pyramids
And makes them real and Egypt real.
You were a part of and related to a great past,
And yet you were so close to many of us.
You believed in the joy of life.

You did not seem to be ashamed of the flesh.
You faced life as it is,
And as it changes.
Some of us almost came to you, Father Malloy,
Seeing how your church had divined the heart,
And provided for it,
Through Peter the Flame,
Peter the Rock.

LUCINDA MATLOCK

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

ANNE RUTLEDGE

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.

I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

WILLIAM H. HERNDON

There by the window in the old house
Perched on the bluff, overlooking miles of valley,
My days of labor closed, sitting out life's decline,
Day by day did I look in my memory,
As one who gazes in an enchantress' crystal globe.
And I saw the figures of the past,
As if in a pageant glassed by a shining dream,
Move through the incredible sphere of time.
And I saw a man arise from the soil like a fabled giant
And throw himself over a deathless destiny,
Master of great armies, head of the republic,
Bringing together into a dithyramb of recreative song
The epic hopes of a people;
At the same time Vulcan of sovereign fires,
Where imperishable shields and swords were beaten out
From spirits tempered in heaven.
Look in the crystal! See how he hastens on
To the place where his path comes up to the path
Of a child of Plutarch and Shakespeare.
O Lincoln, actor indeed, playing well your part,
And Booth, who strode in a mimic play within the play,
Often and often I saw you,
As the cawing crows winged their way to the wood
Over my house-top at solemn sunsets,
There by my window,
Alone.

RUTHERFORD MCDOWELL

They brought me ambrotypes
Of the old pioneers to enlarge.
And sometimes one sat for me—

Someone who was in being
When giant hands from the womb of the world
Tore the republic.
What was it in their eyes?—
For I could never fathom
That mystical pathos of drooped eyelids,
And the serene sorrow of their eyes.
It was like a pool of water,
Amid oak trees at the edge of a forest,
Where the leaves fall,
As you hear the crow of a cock
From a far-off farm house, seen near the hills
Where the third generation lives, and the strong men
And the strong women are gone and forgotten.
And these grand-children and great grand-children
Of the pioneers!—
Truly did my camera record their faces, too,
With so much of the old strength gone,
And the old faith gone,
And the old mastery of life gone,
And the old courage gone,
Which labors and loves and suffers and sings
Under the sun!

ARLO WILL

Did you ever see an alligator
Come up to the air from the mud,
Staring blindly under the full glare of noon?
Have you seen the stabled horses at night
Tremble and start back at the sight of a lantern?
Have you ever walked in darkness
When an unknown door was open before you
And you stood, it seemed, in the light of a thousand candles
Of delicate wax?
Have you walked with the wind in your ears
And the sunlight about you,
And found it suddenly shine with an inner splendor?
Out of the mud many times,
Before many doors of light,

Through many fields of splendor,
Where around your steps a soundless glory scatters
Like new-fallen snow,
Will you go through earth, O strong of soul,
And through unnumbered heavens
To the final flame!

AARON HATFIELD

Better than granite, Spoon River,
Is the memory-picture you keep of me
Standing before the pioneer men and women
There at Concord Church on Communion day.
Speaking in broken voice of the peasant youth
Of Galilee who went to the city
And was killed by bankers and lawyers;
My voice mingling with the June wind
That blew over wheat fields from Atterbury;
While the white stones in the burying ground
Around the Church shimmered in the summer sun.
And there, though my own memories
Were too great to bear, were you, O pioneers,
With bowed heads breathing forth your sorrow
For the sons killed in battle and the daughters
And little children who vanished in life's morning,
Or at the intolerable hour of noon.
But in those moments of tragic silence,
When the wine and bread were passed,
Came the reconciliation for us—
Us the ploughmen and the hewers of wood,
Us the peasants, brothers of the peasant of Galilee—
To us came the Comforter
And the consolation of tongues of flame!

WEBSTER FORD

Do you remember, O Delphic Apollo,
The sunset hour by the river, when Mickey M'Grew
Cried, "There's a ghost," and I, "It's Delphic Apollo;"
And the son of the banker derided us, saying, "It's light
By the flags at the water's edge, you half-witted fools."

And from thence, as the wearisome years rolled on, long after
Poor Mickey fell down in the water tower to his death,
Down, down, through bellowing darkness, I carried
The vision which perished with him like a rocket which falls
And quenches its light in earth, and hid it for fear
Of the son of the banker, calling on Plutus to save me?
Avenged were you for the shame of a fearful heart,
Who left me alone till I saw you again in an hour
When I seemed to be turned to a tree with trunk and branches
Growing indurate, turning to stone, yet burgeoning
In laurel leaves, in hosts of lambent laurel,
Quivering, fluttering, shrinking, fighting the numbness
Creeping into their veins from the dying trunk and branches!
'Tis vain, O youth, to fly the call of Apollo.
Fling yourselves in the fire, die with a song of spring,
If die you must in the spring. For none shall look
On the face of Apollo and live, and choose you must
'Twixt death in the flame and death after years of sorrow,
Rooted fast in the earth, feeling the grisly hand,
Not so much in the trunk as in the terrible numbness
Creeping up to the laurel leaves that never cease
To flourish until you fall. O leaves of me
Too sere for coronal wreaths, and fit alone
For urns of memory, treasured, perhaps, as themes
For hearts heroic, fearless singers and livers—
Delphic Apollo!

SILENCE

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,
And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence of the sick
When their eyes roam about the room.
And I ask: For the depths
Of what use is language?
A beast of the field moans a few times
When death takes its young.
And we are voiceless in the presence of realities—
We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely
And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,
And the silence of a great love,
And the silence of an embittered friendship.
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,
Comes with visions not to be uttered
Into a realm of higher life.
There is the silence of defeat.
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;
And the silence of the dying whose hand
Suddenly grips yours.
There is the silence between father and son,
When the father cannot explain his life,
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and wife.
There is the silence of those who have failed;
And the vast silence that covers
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.

There is the silence of Lincoln,
Thinking of the poverty of his youth.
And the silence of Napoleon
After Waterloo.
And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc
Saying amid the flames, "Blessed Jesus"—
Revealing in two words all sorrows, all hope.
And there is the silence of age,
Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it
In words intelligible to those who have not lived
The great range of life.

And there is the silence of the dead.
If we who are in life cannot speak
Of profound experiences,
Why do you marvel that the dead
Do not tell you of death?
Their silence shall be interpreted
As we approach them.

THE GARDEN

I do not like my garden, but I love
The trees I planted and the flowers thereof.
How does one choose his garden? Oh with eyes
O'er which a passion or illusion lies.
Perhaps it wakens memories of a lawn
You knew before somewhere. Or you are drawn
By an old urn, a little gate, a roof
Which soars into a blue sky, clear, aloof.
One buys a garden gladly. Even the worst
Seems tolerable or beautiful at first.
Their very faults give loving labor scope
One can correct, adorn; 'tis sweet to hope
For beauty to emerge out of your toil,
To build the walks and fertilize the soil.
Before I knew my garden, or awoke
To its banality, I set an oak
At one end for a life-long husbandry,

A white syringa and a lilac tree
Close to one side to hide a crumbling wall
Which was my neighbor's, held in several
Title and beyond my right to mend—
One cannot with an ancient time contend.

Some houses shadowed me. I did not dream
The sun would never look over them and gleam,
Save at the earliest hour. So all the day
One half my garden under twilight lay.
Another soul had overlooked the shade:
I found the boundaries of a bed he made
For tulips. Well, I had a fresher trust
And spent my heart upon this sterile dust.
What thing will grow where never the sun shines?
Vainly I planted flowering stalks and vines.
What years to learn the soil? Why, even weeds
Look green and fresh. But if one concedes
Salvia will flourish not, nor palest phlox,
One might have hope left for a row of box.

Why is it that some silent places thrill
With elfin comradeship, and others fill
The heart with sickening loneliness? My breast
Seems hollow for great emptiness, unrest—
Casting my eyes about my garden where
I still must live, breathing its lifeless air.
Why should I have a garden anyway?
I have so many friends who pass the day
In streets or squares, or little barren courts.
I fancy there are gardens of all sorts,
Far worse than mine. And who has this delight?—
There's my syringa with its blooms of white!
It flourishes in my garden! In this brief
Season of blossoms and unfolding leaf
What if I like my garden not, but love
The oak tree and the lilac tree thereof,
And hide my face, lest one my rapture guess,
Amid the white syringa's loveliness?

DESOLATE SCYTHIA

When there are no distances in music,
No far-off things suggested of faery forests or celestial heights;
When nothing undiscovered stands back of the written page,
And the landscape contains nothing hidden,
And no alluring spirits of further places;
When no more in eyes shines the light of mystery,
And the thrill of discovered kinships
Has fallen into the familiar recognition
That takes all men and women
As daily associates of an accustomed world,
Then you have come to the uttermost plain of earth
Where lie the rocks of desolate Scythia.

MY LIGHT WITH YOURS

When the sea has devoured the ships,
And the spires and the towers
Have gone back to the hills,
And all the cities
Are one with the plains again,
And the beauty of bronze
And the strength of steel
Are blown over silent continents
As the desert sand is blown—
My dust with yours forever.

When folly and wisdom are no more,
And fire is no more,
Because man is no more;
When the dead world, slowly spinning,
Drifts and falls through the void—
My light with yours
In the Light of Lights forever!

SLIP-SHOE LOVEY

You're the cook's understudy,
A gentle idiot body.
You are slender like a broom,
Weaving up and down the room
With your dirt hair in a twist
And your left eye in a mist.
Never thinkin', never hopin',
With your wet mouth open.
So bewildered and so busy
As you scrape the dirty kettles,
O Slip-shoe Lizzie,
As you rattle with the pans.
There's a clatter of old metals,
O Slip-shoe Lovey,
As you clean the milk cans.
You're a greasy little dovey,
A laughing scullery daughter,
As you slop the dish water—
So abstracted and so dizzy,
O Slip-shoe Lizzie!

So mussy, little hussie,
With the china that you break.
And the kitchen in a smear
When the bread is yet to bake,
And the market things are here—
O Slip-shoe Lovey!

You are hurrying and scurrying
From the sink to the oven,
So forgetful and so sloven.
You are bustling and hustling
From the pantry to the door,
With your shoe-strings on the floor,
And your apron-strings a-draggin',
And your spattered skirt a-saggin.'

You're an angel idiot lovey—
One forgives you all this clatter
Washing dishes, beating batter.
But there is another matter
As you dream above the sink:
You're in love pitter-patter,
With the butcher-boy, I think.
And he'll get you, he has got you!
If he hasn't got you yet.

For he means to make you his,
O Slip-shoe Liz;
And your open mouth is wet
To a little boyish chatter.
You're an easy thing to flatter,
With your hank of hair a-twist,
And your left eye in a mist,
O Slip-shoe Lovey!

So hurried and so flurried,
And just a little worried,
You lean about the room
Like a mop, like a broom.
O Slip-shoe Lovey!
O Slip-shoe Lovey!

CHRISTMAS AT INDIAN POINT

Who is that calling through the night,
A wail that dies when the wind roars?
We heard it first on Shipley's Hill,
It faded out at Comingoer's.

Along five miles of wintry road
A horseman galloped with a cry,
"'Twas two o'clock," said Herman Pointer,
"When I heard clattering hoofs go by.

"I flung the winder up to listen;
I heerd him there on Gordon's Ridge;
I heerd the loose boards bump and rattle
When he went over Houghton's Bridge."

Said Roger Ragsdale: "I was doctorin'
A heifer in the barn, and then
My boy says: 'Pap, that's Billy Paris.'
'There,' says my boy, 'it is again:'

"Says I: 'That kain't be Billy Paris,
We seed 'im at the Christmas tree.
It's two o'clock,' says I, 'and Billy
I seed go home with Emily.'

" 'He is too old for galavantin'
Upon a night like this,' says I.
'Well, pap,' says he, 'I know that frosty
Good-natured huskiness in that cry.'

" 'It kain't be Billy,' says I, swabbin'
The heifer's tongue and mouth with brine;
'I never thought—it makes me shiver,
And goose-flesh up and down the spine.' "

Said Doggie Traylor: "When I heard it
I 'lowed 'twas Pin Hook's rowdy new 'uns.
Them Cashner boys was at the schoolhouse
Drinkin' there at the Christmas doin's."

Said Pete McCue: "I lit a candle
And held it up to the winder-pane;
But when I heerd again the holler
'Twere half-way down the Bowman Lane."

Said Andy Ensley: "First I knowed
I thought he'd thump the door away.
I hopped from bed, and says, 'Who is it?'
'O Emily,' I heard him say.

"And ther stood Billy Paris tremblin'—
His face so white, he looked so queer.
'O Andy'—and his voice went broken.
'Come in,' says I, 'and have a cheer.'

" 'Sit by the fire—I kicked the logs up—
'What brings you here, I would be told?'
Says he: 'My hand just . . . happened near hers,
It teched her hand . . . and it war cold.

" 'We got back from the Christmas doin's
'And went to bed, and she was sayin',
(The clock struck ten) if it keeps snowin'
Tomorrow there'll be splendid sleighin'.'

" 'My hand teched hers, the clock struck two,
And then I thought I heerd her moan,
It war the wind I guess, for Emily
War lyin' dead. . . . She's thar alone.'

"I left him then to call my woman
To tell her that her mother died.
When we came back his voice was steady,
The big tears in his eyes was dried.

"He just sot there and quiet like
Talked 'bout the fishin' times they had,
And said for her to die on Christmas
Was somethin' 'bout it made him glad.

He grew so calm he almost skeered us.
Says he: 'It's a fine Christmas over there.'
Says he: 'She was the lovingest woman
That ever walked this vale of care.'

"Says he: 'She allus laughed and sang,
I never heerd her once complain.'
Says he: 'It's not so bad a Christmas
When she can go, and have no pain.'

"Says he: 'The Christmas's good for her.'
Says he: . . . 'Not very good for me.'
He hid his face then in his muffler,
And sobbed and sobbed, 'O Emily!' "

THE LAKE BOATS

In an old print
I see a thicket of masts on the river.
But in the prints to be
There will be lake boats,
With port holes, funnels, rows of decks,
Huddled like swans by the docks,
Under the shadows of cliffs of brick.
And who will know from the prints to be,
When the Albatross and the Golden Eagle,
The flying craft which shall carry the vision
Of impatient lovers wounded by spring
To the shaded rivers of Michigan,
That it was the Missouri, the Iowa,
And the City of Benton Harbor
Which lay huddled like swans by the docks?

You are not Lake Leman,
Walled in by Mt. Blanc.
One sees the whole world round you
And beyond you, Lake Michigan.
And when the melodious winds of March
Wrinkle you and drive on the shore
The serpent rifts of sand and snow,
And sway the giant limbs of oaks,
Longing to bud,
The boats put forth for the ports that began to stir,
With the creak of reels unwinding the nets,
And the ring of the caulking wedge.
But in the June days—
The Alabama ploughs through liquid tons
Of sapphire waves.
She sinks from hills to valleys of water,

And rises again
Like a swimming gull!
I wish a hundred years to come, and forever
All lovers could know the rapture
Of the lake boats sailing the first spring days
To coverts of hepatica,
With the whole world sphering round you,
And the whole of the sky beyond you.

I knew the Captain of the City of Grand Rapids.
He had sailed the seas as a boy.
And he stood on deck against the railing
Puffing a cigar,
Showing in his eyes the cinema flash of the sun on the waves.
It was June and life was easy. . . .
One could lie on deck and sleep,
Or sit in the sun and dream.
People were walking the decks and talking,
Children were singing.
And down on the purser's deck
A man was dancing by himself,
Whirling around like a dervish.
And this captain said to me:
"No life is better than this.
I could live forever,
And do nothing but run this boat
From the dock at Chicago to the dock at Holland
And back again."

One time I went to Grand Haven
On the Alabama with Charley Shippey.
It was dawn, but white dawn only,
Under the reign of Leucothea,
As we volplaned, so it seemed, from the lake
Past the lighthouse into the river;
And afterward, laughing and talking,
Hurried to Van Dreezer's restaurant
For breakfast.
(Charley knew him and talked of things
Unknown to me as he cooked the breakfast.)

Then we fished the mile's length of the pier
In a gale full of warmth and moisture
Which blew the gulls about like confetti,
And flapped like a flag the linen duster
Of a fisherman who paced the pier—
(Charley called him Rip Van Winkle).
The only thing that could be better
Than this day on the pier
Would be its counterpart in heaven,
As Swedenborg would say—
Charley is fishing somewhere now, I think.

There is a grove of oaks on a bluff by the river
At Berrien Springs.
There is a cottage that eyes the lake
Between pines and silver birches
At South Haven.
There is the inviolable wonder of wooded shore
Curving for miles at Saugatuck;
And at Holland a beach like Scheveningen's;
And at Charlevoix the sudden quaintness
Of an old-world place by the sea.
There are the hills around Elk Lake
Where the blue of the sky is so still and clear
It seems it was rubbed above them
By the swipe of a giant thumb.
And beyond these the Little Traverse Bay
Where the roar of the breeze goes round
Like a roulette ball in the groove of the wheel,
Circling the bay;
And beyond these Mackinac and the Cheneaux Islands—
And beyond these a great mystery!

Neither ice floes, nor winter's palsy
Stays the tide in the river.
And under the shadows of cliffs of brick
The lake boats,
Huddled like swans,
Turn and sigh like sleepers—
They are longing for the spring!

Charlotte Mew

THE FARMER'S BRIDE

Three summers since I chose a maid,—
Too young maybe—but more's to do
At harvest-time than bide and woo.
When us was wed she turned afraid
Of love and me and all things human;
Like the shut of a winter's day.
Her smile went out, and 'twasn't a woman—
More like a little frightened fay.
One night, in the fall, she runned away.

"Out 'mong the sheep, her be," they said.
Should properly have been abed;
But sure enough she wasn't there
Lying awake with her wide brown stare.
So over seven-acre field and up-along across the down
We chased her, flying like a hare
Before our lanterns. To Church-town
All in a shiver and a scare
We caught her, fetched her home at last
And turned the key upon her, fast.

She does the work about the house
As well as most, but like a mouse:
Happy enough to chat and play
With birds and rabbits and such as they,
So long as men-folk keep away.
"Not near, not near!" her eyes beseech
When one of us comes within reach.
The women say that beasts in stall
Look round like children at her call.
I've hardly heard her speak at all.

Shy as a leveret, swift as he;
Straight and slight as a young larch tree;

Sweet as the first wild violets, she,
To her wild self. But what to me?
The short days shorten and the oaks are brown,
The blue smoke rises to the low grey sky,
One leaf in the still air falls slowly down,
A magpie's spotted feathers lie
On the black earth spread white with rime,
The berries redden up to Christmas-time.
What's Christmas-time without there be
Some other in the house than we!

She sleeps up in the attic there
Alone, poor maid. 'Tis but a stair
Betwixt us. Oh, my God!—the down,
The soft young down of her; the brown,
The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair!

BESIDE THE BED

Someone has shut the shining eyes, straightened and folded
The wandering hands quietly covering the unquiet breast:
So, smoothed and silenced you lie, like a child, not again to be questioned or scolded;
But, for you, not one of us believes that this is rest.

Not so to close the windows down can cloud and deaden
The blue beyond; or to screen the wavering flame subdue its breath:
Why, if I lay my cheek to your cheek, your gray lips, like dawn, would quiver and redden,
Breaking into the old odd smile at this fraud of death.

Because all night you have not turned to us or spoken
It is time for you to wake; your dreams were never very deep:
I, for one, have seen the thin bright twisted threads of them dimmed suddenly and broken;
This is only a most piteous pretence of sleep!

Alice Meynell

MATERNITY

One wept whose only child was dead
  New-born, ten years ago.
"Weep not; he is in bliss," they said.
  She answered, "Even so.

"Ten years ago was born in pain
  A child not now forlorn.
But oh, ten years ago, in vain
  A mother, a mother was born."

CHIMES

Brief on a flying night,
  From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
  And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
  Abrupt—oh, hark!—
A fleet of bells set sails,
  And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing:
  Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
  And flies with the cloud.

Max Michelson

O BROTHER TREE

O brother tree! O brother tree! Tell to me, thy brother,
The secret of thy life,
The wonder of thy being.

My brother tree, my brother tree,
My heart is open to thee—
Reveal me all thy secrets.

Beloved tree, beloved tree,
I have shattered all my pride.
I love thee, brother, as myself.
Oh, explain to me thy wonders.

Beloved one, adored one,
I will not babble of it among fools—
I will tell it only to the unspoiled:
Reveal to me thy being.

I have watched thy leaves in sunshine,
I have heard them in the storm.
My heart drank a droplet of thy holy joy and wonder,
One drop from the ocean of thy wonder.

I am thy humble brother—I am thine own.
Reveal thy life to me,
Reveal thy calm joy to me,
Reveal to me thy serene knowledge.

THE BIRD

From a branch
The bird called:

I hold your heart!
I wash it
And scour it
With bits of song
Like pebbles;
And your doubts
And your sorrows
Fall—drip, drip, drip—
Like dirty water.
I pipe to it
In little notes
Of life clear as a pool,
And of death
Clearer still;
And I swoop with it
In the blue
And in the nest
Of a cloud.

STORM

Storm
Wild one,
Take me in your whirl,
In your giddy reel,
In your shot-like leaps and flights.
Hear me call—stop and hear.
I know you, blusterer; I know you, wild one—
I know your mysterious call.

A HYMN TO NIGHT

Come, mysterious night;
Descend and nestle to us.

Descend softly on the houses
We built with pride,
Without worship.
Fold them in your veil,
Spill your shadows.

Come over our stores and factories,
Hide our pride—our shame—
With your nebulous wings.

Come down on our cobbled streets:
Unleash your airy hounds.
Come to the sleepers, night;
Light in them your fires.

LOVE LRYIC

Stir—
Shake off sleep.
Your eyes are the soul of clear waters—
Pigeons
In a city street.

Suns now dead
Have tucked away of their gold for your hair:
My buried mouth still tastes their fires.

A tender god built your breasts—
Apples of desire;
Their whiteness slakes the throat;
Their form soothes like honey.

Wake up!
Or the song-bird in my heart
Will peck open the shell of your dreams.

. . . . . .

Sleep, my own,
Soaring over rivers of fire.
Sleep, my own,
Wading waters of gold.

Joy is in my heart—
It flutters around in my soul.
. . . Softly—
I hear the rosy dreams . . .

Edna St. Vincent Millay

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide gray skies!
Thy mists, that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with color! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, world, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all
But never knew I this.
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

ASHES OF LIFE

Love has gone, and left me and the days are all alike.
Eat I must, and sleep I will—and would that night were here!
But ah, to lie awake and hear the slow hours strike!
Would that it were day again, with twilight near!

Love has gone and left me, and I don't know what to do;
This or that or what you will is all the same to me;
But all the things that I begin I leave before I'm through—
There's little use in anything as far as I can see.

Love has gone and left me, and the neighbors knock and borrow,
And life goes on forever like the gnawing of a mouse.
And tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
There's this little street and this little house.

THE SHROUD

Death, I say, my heart is bowed
Unto thine, O mother!
This red gown will make a shroud
Good as any other.

(I, that could not wait to wear
My own bridal things,
In a dress dark as my hair
Made my answerings.

I, tonight, that till he came
Could not, could not wait,
In a gown as bright as flame
Held for them the gate.)

Death, I say, my heart is bowed
Unto thine, O mother!
This red gown will make a shroud
Good as any other.

TRAVEL

The railroad track is miles away,
  And the day is loud with voices speaking;
Yet there isn't a train goes by all day
  But I hear its whistle shrieking.

All night there isn't a train goes by,
  Though the night is still for sleep and dreaming,
But I see its cinders red on the sky,
  And hear its engine steaming.

My heart is warm with the friends I make,
  And better friends I'll not be knowing;
Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take,
  No matter where it's going.

RECUERDO

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,
We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon;
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry,
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
We hailed, "Good-morrow, mother!" to a shawl-covered head,
And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read;
And she wept, "God bless you!" for the apples and pears,
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.

SPRING

To what purpose, April, do you return again?
Beauty is not enough.
You can no longer quiet me with the redness
Of little leaves opening stickily.
I know what I know.
The sun is hot on my neck as I observe
The spikes of the crocus.
The smell of the earth is good.
It is apparent that there is no death.
But what does that signify?
Not only under ground are the brains of men
Eaten by maggots.
Life in itself
Is nothing—
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.
It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers!

EPITAPH

Heap not on this mound
Roses that she loved so well—
Why bewilder her with roses,
That she cannot see or smell?
She is happy where she lies
With the dust upon her eyes.

PRAYER TO PERSEPHONE

Be to her, Persephone,
All the things I might not be;
Take her head upon your knee.
She that was so proud and wild,
Flippant, arrogant and free—

She that had no need of me—
Is a little lonely child
Lost in Hell. Persephone,
Take her head upon your knee;
Say to her, "My dear, my dear,
It is not so dreadful here."

CHORUS

Give away her gowns,
Give away her shoes—
She has no more use
For her fragrant gowns.
Take them all down—
Blue, green, blue,
Lilac, pink, blue—
From their padded hangers.
She will dance no more
In her narrow shoes;
Sweep her narrow shoes
From the closet floor.

SONNETS

Oh, think not I am faithful to a vow!
Faithless am I save to Love's self alone.
Were you not lovely I would leave you now—
After the feet of Beauty fly my own.
Were you not still my hunger's rarest food,
And water ever to my wildest thirst,
I would desert you—think not but I would!—
And seek another, as I sought you first.
But you are mobile as the veering air,
And all your charms more changeful than the tide;
Wherefore to be inconstant is no care—
I have but to continue at your side.
So wanton, light and false, my love, are you,
I am most faithless when I most am true.

Into the golden vessel of great song
Let us pour all our passion. Breast to breast
Let other lovers lie, in love and rest;
Not we, articulate, so, but with the tongue
Of all the world: the churning blood, the long
Shuddering quiet, the desperate hot palms pressed
Sharply together upon the escaping guest,
The common soul, unguarded, and grown strong.
Longing alone is singer to the lute;
Let still on nettles in the open sigh
The minstrel, that in slumber is as mute
As any man; and love be far and high,
That else forsakes the topmost branch, a fruit
Found on the ground by every passer-by.

Not with libations, but with shouts and laughter
We drenched the altars of Love's sacred grove,
Shaking to earth green fruits, impatient after
The launching of the colored moths of Love.
Love's proper myrtle and his mother's zone
We bound about our irreligious brows,
And fettered him with garlands of our own,
And spread a banquet in his frugal house,
Not yet the god has spoken; but I fear,
Though we should break our bodies in his flame,
And pour our blood upon his altar, here
Henceforward is a grove without a name—
A pasture to the shaggy goats of Pan,
Whence flee forever a woman and a man.

Cherish you then the hope I shall forget
At length, my lord, Pieria?—put away
For your so passing sake, this mouth of clay,
These mortal bones against my body set,
For all the puny fever and frail sweat
Of human love?—renounce for these, I say,
The Singing Mountain's memory, and betray
The silent lyre that hangs upon me yet?
Ah, but indeed some day shall you awake,

Rather, from dreams of me, that at your side
So many nights, a lover and a bride,
But stern in my soul's chastity, have lain,
To walk the world forever for my sake,
And in each chamber find me gone again!

And you as well must die, beloved dust
And all your beauty stand you in no stead;
This flawless vital hand, this perfect head,
This body of flame and steel, before the gust
Of Death, or under his autumnal frost,
Shall be as any leaf, be no less dead
Than the first leaf that fell—this wonder fled,
Altered, estranged, disintegrated, lost.
Nor shall my love avail you in your hour,
In spite of all my love you will arise
Upon that day and wander down the air
Obscurely as the unattended flower,
It mattering not how beautiful you were,
Or how beloved above all else that dies.

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all that prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth, and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage. Let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.
Oh, blinding hour—oh, holy terrible day—
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare; fortunate they
Who though once only, and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

Harold Monro

GREAT CITY

When I returned at sunset,
The serving-maid was singing softly
Under the dark stairs, and in the house
Twilight had entered like a moon-ray.
Time was so dead I could not understand
The meaning of midday or of midnight,
But like falling waters—falling, hissing, falling—
Silence seemed an everlasting sound.

I sat in my dark room,
And watched sunset
And saw starlight.
I heard the tramp of homing men,
And the last call of the last child.
Then a lone bird twittered,
And suddenly, beyond the housetops,
I imagined dew in the country,
In the hay, on the buttercups;
The rising moon,
The scent of early night,
The songs, the echoes,
Dogs barking,
Day closing,
Gradual slumber,
Sweet rest.

When all the lamps were lighted in the town
I passed into the street ways and I watched,
Wakeful, almost happy,
And half the night I wandered in the street.

YOUTH IN ARMS

Happy boy, happy boy,
David the immortal-willed,
Youth a thousand thousand times
Slain, but not once killed,
Swaggering again today
In the old contemptuous way;

Leaning backward from your thigh
Up against the tinselled bar—
Dust and ashes! is it you?
Laughing, boasting, there you are!
First we hardly recognized you
In your modern avatar.

Soldier, rifle, brown khaki—
Is your blood as happy so?
Where's your sling or painted shield,
Helmet, pike or bow?
Well, you're going to the wars—
That is all you need to know.

Graybeards plotted. They were sad.
Death was in their wrinkled eyes.
At their tables, with their maps,
Plans and calculations, wise
They all seemed; for well they knew
How ungrudgingly Youth dies.

At their green official baize
They debated all the night
Plans for your adventurous days
Which you followed with delight,
Youth in all your wanderings,
David of a thousand slings.

THE STRANGE COMPANION

A Fragment

That strange companion came on shuffling feet,
Passed me, then turned, and touched my arm.

He said (and he was melancholy,
And both of us looked fretfully,
And slowly we advanced together),
He said: "I bring you your inheritance."

I watched his eyes; they were dim.
I doubted him, watched him, doubted him . . .
But, in a ceremonious way,
He said: "You are too grey:
Come, you must be merry for a day."

And I, because my heart was dumb,
Because the life in me was numb,
Cried: "I will come. I *will* come."

So, without another word,
We two jaunted on the street.
I had heard, often heard,
The shuffling of those feet of his,
The shuffle of his feet.

And he muttered in my ear
Such a wheezy jest
As a man may often hear—
Not the worst, not the best
That a man may hear.

Then he murmured in my face
Something that was true.
He said: "I have known this long, long while,
All there is to know of you."
And the light of the lamp cut a strange smile
On his face, and we muttered along the street,
Good enough friends, on the usual beat.

We lived together long, long.
We were always alone, he and I.
We never smiled with each other;
We were like brother and brother,
Dimly accustomed.
Can a man know
Why he must live, or where he should go?

He brought me that joke or two,
And we roared with laughter, for want of a smile,
As every man in the world might do.
He who lies all night in bed
Is a fool, and midnight will crush his head.

When he threw a glass of wine in my face
One night, I hit him, and we parted;
But in a short space
We came back to each other melancholy-hearted,
Told our pain,
Swore we would not part again.

One night we turned a table over
The body of some slain fool to cover,
And all the company clapped their hands;
So we spat in their faces,
And travelled away to other lands.

I wish for every man he find
A strange companion so
Completely to his mind
With whom he everywhere may go.

REAL PROPERTY

Tell me about that harvest field.
Oh! Fifty acres of living bread.
The color has painted itself in my heart.
The form is patterned in my head.

So now I take it everywhere;
See it whenever I look round;
Hear it growing through every sound,
Know exactly the sound it makes—
Remembering, as one must all day,
Under the pavement the live earth aches.

Trees are at the farther end,
Limes all full of the mumbling bee;
So there must be a harvest field
Whenever one thinks of a linden tree.

A hedge is about it, very tall,
Hazy and cool, and breathing sweet.
Round paradise is such a wall
And all the day, in such a way,
In paradise the wild birds call.

You only need to close your eyes
And go within your secret mind,
And you'll be into paradise:
I've learnt quite easily to find
Some linden trees and drowsy bees,
A tall sweet hedge with the corn behind.

I will not have that harvest mown;
I'll keep the corn and leave the bread.
I've bought that field; it's now my own:
I've fifty acres in my head.
I take it as a dream to bed.
I carry it about all day. . . .

Sometimes when I have found a friend
I give a blade of corn away.

Harriet Monroe

THE HOTEL

The long resounding marble corridors, the shining parlors with shining women in them.

The French room, with its gilt and garlands under plump little tumbling painted Loves.

The Turkish room, with its jumble of many carpets and its stiffly squared un-Turkish chairs.

The English room, all heavy crimson and gold, with spreading palms lifted high in round green tubs.

The electric lights in twos and threes and hundreds, made into festoons and spirals and arabesques, a maze and magic of bright persistent radiance.

The people sitting in corners by twos and threes, and cooing together under the glare.

The long rows of silent people in chairs, watching with eyes that see not while the patient band tangles the air with music.

The bell-boys marching in with cards, and shouting names over and over into ears that do not heed.

The stout and gorgeous dowagers in lacy white and lilac, bedizened with many jewels, with smart little scarlet or azure hats on their gray-streaked hair.

The business men in trim and spotless suits, who walk in and out with eager steps, or sit at the desks and tables, or watch the shining women.

The telephone girls forever listening to far voices, with the silver band over their hair and the little black caps obliterating their ears.

The telegraph tickers sounding their perpetual chit—chit-chit from the uttermost ends of the earth.

The waiters, in black swallow-tails and white aprons, passing here and there with trays of bottles and glasses.

The quiet and sumptuous bar-room, with purplish men softly drinking in little alcoves, while the barkeeper, mixing bright liquors, is rapidly plying his bottles.

The great bedecked and gilded café, with its glitter of a thousand

mirrors, with its little white tables bearing gluttonous dishes whereto bright forks, held by pampered hands, flicker daintily back and forth.

The white-tiled immaculate kitchen, with many little round blue fires, where white-clad cooks are making spiced and flavored dishes.

The cool cellars filled with meats and fruits, or layered with sealed and bottled wines mellowing softly in the darkness.

The invisible stories of furnaces and machines, burrowing deep down into the earth, where grimy workmen are heavily laboring.

The many-windowed stories of little homes and shelters and sleeping-places, reaching up into the night like some miraculous high-piled honey-comb of wax-white cells.

The clothes inside of the cells—the stuffs, the silks, the laces; the elaborate delicate disguises that wait in trunks and drawers and closets, or bedrape and conceal human flesh.

The people inside of the clothes, the bodies white and young, bodies fat and bulging, bodies wrinkled and wan, all alike veiled by fine fabrics, sheltered by walls and roofs, shut in from the sun and stars.

The souls inside of the bodies—the naked souls; souls weazen and weak, or proud and brave; all imprisoned in flesh, wrapped in woven stuffs, enclosed in thick and painted masonry, shut away with many shadows from the shining truth.

God inside of the souls, God veiled and wrapped and imprisoned and shadowed in fold on fold of flesh and fabrics and mockeries; but ever alive, struggling and rising again, seeking the light, freeing the world.

THE TURBINE

To W. S. M.

Look at her—there she sits upon her throne
As ladylike and quiet as a nun!
But if you cross her—whew! her thunderbolts
Will shake the earth! She's proud as any queen—
The beauty; knows her royal business too—
To light the world; and does it night by night

When her gay lord, the sun, gives up his job.
I am her slave; I wake and watch and run
From dark till dawn beside her: all the while
She hums there softly, purring with delight
Because men bring the riches of the earth
To feed her hungry fires. I do her will
And dare not disobey, for her right hand
Is power, her left is terror, and her anger
Is havoc. Look—if I but lay a wire
Across the terminals of yonder switch
She'll burst her windings, rip her casings off,
And shriek till envious Hell shoots up its flames,
Shattering her very throne. And all her people,
The laboring, trampling, dreaming crowds out there—
Fools and the wise who look to her for light—
Will walk in darkness through the liquid night,
Submerged.

Sometimes I wonder why she stoops
To be my friend—oh yes, who talks to me
And sings away my loneliness; my friend,
Though I am trivial and she sublime.
Hard-hearted?—No, tender and pitiful,
As all the great are; every arrogant grief
She comforts quietly, and all my joys
Dance to her measures through the tolerant night.
She talks to me, tells me her troubles too,
Just as I tell her mine. Perhaps she feels
An ache deep down—that agonizing stab
Of grit grating her bearings; then her voice
Changes its tune, it wails and calls to me
To soothe her anguish, and I run, her slave,
Probe like a surgeon and relieve the pain.

We have our jokes too, little mockeries
That no one else in all the swarming world
Would see the point of. She will laugh at me
To show her power: maybe her carbon packings
Leak steam, and I run madly back and forth
To keep the infernal fiends from breaking loose:

Suddenly she will throttle them herself
And chuckle softly, far above me there,
At my alarms.

But there are moments—hush!—
When my turn comes; her slave can be her master,
Conquering her he serves. For she's a woman,
Gets bored there on her throne, tired of herself,
Tingles with power that turns to wantonness.
Suddenly something's wrong—she laughs at me,
Bedevils the frail wires with some mad caress
That thrills blind space, calls down ten thousand lightnings
To ruin her pomp and set her spirit free.
Then with this puny hand, swift as her threat,
Must I beat back the chaos, hold in leash
Destructive furies, rescue her—even her—
From the fierce rashness of her truant mood,
And make me lord of far and near a moment,
Startling the mystery. Last night I did it—
Alone here with my hand upon her heart,
I faced the mounting fiends and whipped them down;
And never a wink from the long file of lamps
Betrayed her to the world.

So there she sits,
Mounted on all the ages, at the peak
Of time. The first man dreamed of light, and dug
The sodden ignorance away, and cursed
The darkness; young primeval races dragged
Foundation stones, and piled into the void
Rage and desire; the Greek mounted and sang
Promethean songs and lit a signal fire;
The Roman bent his iron will to forge
Deep furnaces; slow epochs riveted
With hope the secret chambers: till at last
We, you and I, this living age of ours,
A new-winged Mercury, out of the skies
Filch the wild spirit of light, and chain him there
To do her will forever.

Look, my friend,
Here is a sign! What is this crystal sphere—
This little bulb of glass I lightly lift,
This iridescent bubble a child might blow
Out of its brazen pipe to hold the sun—
What strange toy is it! In my hand it lies
Cold and inert, its puny artery—
That curling cobweb film—ashen and dead.
But now—a twist or two—let it but touch
The hem, far trailing, of my lady's robe,
And look, the burning life-blood of the stars
Leaps to its heart, and glows against the dark,
Kindling the world.

Even so I touch her garment,
Her servant through the quiet night; and thus
I lay my hand upon the Pleiades
And feel their throb of fire. Grandly she gives
To me unworthy; woman inscrutable,
Scatters her splendors through my darkness, leads me
Far out into the workshop of the worlds.
There I can feel those infinite energies
Our little earth just gnaws at through the ether,
And see the light our sunshine hides. Out there,
Close to the heart of life, I am at peace.

ON THE PORCH

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain:

Oh, billow on billow,
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war.

Over me—down—down—
Lunges and plunges
The huge gun with its one blind eye,
The armored train,
And, swooping out of the sky,
The aeroplane.
Down—down—
The army proudly swinging
Under gay flags,
The glorious dead heaped up like rags,
A church with bronze bells ringing,
A city all towers,
Gardens of lovers and flowers,
The round world swinging
In the light of the sun:
All broken, undone,
All down—under
Black surges of thunder . . .

Oh, billow on billow
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war . . .

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain.

THE WONDER OF IT

How wild, how witch-like weird that life should be!
That the insensate rock dared dream of me,
And take to bursting out and burgeoning—
Oh, long ago—yo ho!—
And wearing green! How stark and strange a thing
That life should be!

Oh, mystic mad, a rigadoon of glee,
That dust should rise, and leap alive, and flee
A-foot, a-wing, and shake the deeps with cries—
Oh, far away—yo-hay!
What moony masque, what arrogant disguise
That life should be!

THE INNER SILENCE

Noises that strive to tear
Earth's mantle soft of air
And break upon the stillness where it dwells:
The noise of battle and the noise of prayer,
The cooing noise of love that softly tells
Joy's brevity, the brazen noise of laughter—
All these affront me not, nor echo after
Through the long memories.
They may not enter the deep chamber where
Forever silence is.

Silence more soft than spring hides in the ground
Beneath her budding flowers;
Silence more rich than ever was the sound
Of harps through long warm hours.
It's like a hidden vastness, even as though
Great suns might there beat out their measures slow,
Nor break the hush mightier than they.
There do I dwell eternally,
There where no thought may follow me,
Nor stillest dreams whose pinions plume the way.

LOVE SONG

I love my life, but not too well
To give it to thee like a flower,
So it may pleasure thee to dwell
Deep in its perfume but an hour.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To sing it note by note away,
So to thy soul the song may tell
The beauty of the desolate day.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To cast it like a cloak on thine,
Against the storms that sound and swell
Between thy lonely heart and mine.
I love my life, but not too well.

A FAREWELL

Good-by!—no, do not grieve that it is over,
The perfect hour;
That the winged joy, sweet honey-loving rover,
Flits from the flower.

Grieve not—it is the law. Love will be flying—
Oh, love and all.
Glad was the living—blessed be the dying!
Let the leaves fall.

LULLABY

My little one, sleep softly
Among the toys and flowers.
Sleep softly, O my first-born son,
Through all the long dark hours.
And if you waken far away
I shall be wandering too.
If far away you run and play
My heart must follow you.

Sleep softly, O my baby,
And smile down in your sleep.
Here are red rose-buds for your bed—
Smile, and I will not weep.

We made our pledge—you did not fear
To go—why then should I?
Though long you sleep, I shall be near;
So hush—we must not cry.

Sleep softly, dear one, softly—
They can not part us now;
Forever rest here on my breast,
My kiss upon your brow.
What though they hide a little grave
With dream-flowers false or true?
What difference? We will just be brave
Together—I and you.

PAIN

She heard the children playing in the sun,
And through her window saw the white-stemmed trees
Sway like a film of silver in the breeze
Under the purple hills; and one by one
She noted chairs and cabinets, and spun
The pattern of her bed's pale draperies:
Yet all the while she knew that each of these
Was a dull lie, in irony begun.
For down in hell she lay, whose livid fires
Love may not quench, whose pangs death may not quell.
The round immensity of earth and sky
Shrank to a point that speared her. Loves, desires,
Darkened to torturing ministers of hell,
Whose mockery of joy deepened the lie.

Little eternities the black hours were,
That no beginning knew, that knew no end.
Day waned, and night came like a faithless friend,
Bringing no joy; till slowly over her
A numbness grew, and life became a blur,
A silence, an oblivion, a dark blend
Of dim lost agonies, whose downward trend
Led into time's eternal sepulchre.

And yet, when after aeons infinite
Of dark eclipse she wakened, it was day!
The pictures hung upon the walls, each one;
Under the same rose-patterned coverlet
She lay; spring was still young, and still the play
Of happy children sounded in the sun.

THE WATER OUZEL

Little brown surf-bather of the mountains!
Spirit of foam, lover of cataracts, shaking your wings in falling waters!
Have you no fear of the roar and rush when Nevada plunges—
Nevada, the shapely dancer, feeling her way with slim white fingers?
How dare you dash at Yosemite the mighty—
Tall, white-limbed Yosemite, leaping down, down, over the cliff?
Is it not enough to lean on the blue air of mountains?
Is it not enough to rest with your mate at timber-line, in bushes that hug the rocks?
Must you fly through mad waters where the heaped-up granite breaks them?
Must you batter your wings in the torrent?
Must you plunge for life or death through the foam?

THE PINE AT TIMBER-LINE

What has bent you,
Warped and twisted you,
Torn and crippled you?—
What has embittered you,
O lonely tree?

You search the rocks for a footing,
dragging scrawny roots;
You bare your thin breast to the storms,
and fling out wild arms behind you;
You throw back your witch-like head,
with wisps of hair stringing the wind.

You fight with the snows,
You rail and shriek at the tempests.
Old before your time, you challenge the cold stars.

Be still, be satisfied—
Stand straight like your brothers in the valley,
The soft green valley of summer down below.
Why front the endless winter of the peak?
Why seize the lightning in your riven hands?
Why cut the driven wind and shriek aloud?

Why tarry here?

MOUNTAIN SONG

I have not where to lay my head;
  Upon my breast no child shall lie;
For me no marriage feast is spread:
  I walk alone under the sky.

My staff and scrip I cast away—
  Light-burdened to the mountain height!
Climbing the rocky steep by day,
  Kindling my fire against the night.

The bitter hail shall flower the peak,
  The icy wind shall dry my tears.
Strong shall I be, who am but weak,
  When bright Orion spears my fears.

Under the horned moon I shall rise
  Up-swinging on the scarf of dawn.
The sun, searching with level eyes,
  Shall take my hand and lead me on.

Wide flaming pinions veil the West—
  Ah, shall I find? and shall I know?
My feet are bound upon the quest—
  Over the Great Divide I go.

MOTHER EARTH

Oh a grand old time has the earth
In the long long life she lives!
From her huge mist-shrouded birth,
When reeling from under
She tore space asunder,
And feeling her way
Through the dim first day
Rose wheeling to run
In the path of the sun—
From then till forever,
Tiring not, pausing never,
She labors and laughs and gives.

Plains and mountains
She slowly makes,
With mighty hand
Sifting the sand,
Lifting the land
Out of the soft wet clutch of the shouting sea.
At lofty fountains
Her thirst she slakes,
And over the hills
Through the dancing rills
Wide rivers she fills,
That shine and sing and leap in their joy to be free.
Cool greenness she needs
And rich odor of bloom;
And longing, believing,
Slowly conceiving,
Her germ-woof weaving,
She spawns little seeds
By the wombful, the worldful,
And laughs as the pattern grows fair at her loom.

Proudly she trails
Her flower-broidered dresses

In the sight of the sun.
Loudly she hails
Through her far-streaming tresses
His racers that run.
For her heart, ever living, grows eager for life,
Its delight and desire;
She feels the high praise of its passion and strife,
Of its rapture and fire.
There are wings and songs in her trees,
There are gleaming fish in her seas;
The brute beasts brave her
And gnaw her and crave her;
And out of the heart of these
She wrests a dream, a hope,
An arrogant plan
Of life that shall meet her,
Shall know and complete her,
That through ages shall climb and grope,
And at last be man.

Out of the bitter void she wins him—
Out of the night;
With terror and wild hope begins him,
And fierce delight.
She beats him into caves,
She starves and spurns him.
Her hills and plains are graves—
Into dust she turns him.
She teaches him war and wrath
And waste and lust and greed;
Then over his blood-red path
She scatters her fruitful seed.
With bloom of a thousand flowers,
With songs of the summer hours,
With the love of the wind for the tree,
With the dance of the sun on the sea,
She lulls and quells him—
Oh soft her caress!
And tenderly tells him

Of happiness.
Through her ages of years,
Through his toil and his tears,
At her wayward pleasure
She yields of her treasure
A gleam, a hope,
Even a day of days
When the wide heavens ope
And he loves and prays.
Then she laughs in wonder
To see him rise
Her leash from under
And brave the skies!

Oh a grand old time has the earth
In the long long life she lives!—
A grand old time at her work sublime
As she labors and laughs and gives!

SUPERNAL DIALOGUE

Two beings
Stood on the edge of things—
Their breath was space,
And their eyes were suns.

I It was this way he passed—
I know the sound.

II More worlds—
He can not forbear—

I Look down this lane—
It was dark till he passed.
Do you see—anything?

II Seeds of light—glowing, whirling—
A handful.

I Separating now.

II Fierce fire-balls—
So many—so many. Will he get what he wants—
The perfect flower?

I Flower of delight—to bloom beside his throne?
Sometime he will.
[*A pause*]

I Look—that little one—
Burning, aching—
Trailing its tiny orbs—

II Which one?

I See—scarlet—oh, alive!
Deep in that right-hand cluster near the dark.

II With tiny trailers—will it be one of them?
That clouded one, maybe?

I Look—it foams down.
The clouds lift—
There are seas—

II Lands—a creeping green—
Sounds of air moving.

I Hush—oh, whisper!—do you see
Dark specks that crawl?
And wings that flash in the air?

II Spawn—immeasurably minute.
What does he mean, the fecund one, creating without reason or mercy?

I He must—life is his song.
He dreams—he wills.

II Watch now—they change, those atoms.
They stand on end—they lay stone on stone—
They go clad—they utter words.

I Proud—they take their spoil.
Kings—and slaves.

II Oh queer—ingenious! They gather in towns,
They filch our fires to carry them over land and sea.

I They measure the stars—they love—they dream.

II But war—pain—obliterative war and pain.

I So brief—each one a tiny puff—and out.

II Grotesque!

I A few look up—salute us before they fall.
A few dare face him.

II Is it enough?
[*A pause*]

I It cools down—their whirling world.
It is silent—cold.

II Has he lost again? Can he fail?

I Who are we to question? Though he fail again and again—

II Yes, who are we?

I He must go on—he must get the flower.

Two beings
Stood on the edge of things—
Their breath was space,
And their eyes were suns.

Marianne Moore

THAT HARP YOU PLAY SO WELL

O David, if I had
Your power, I should be glad—
In harping, with the sling,
In patient reasoning!

Blake, Homer, Job, and you,
Have made old wine-skins new.
Your energies have wrought
Stout continents of thought.

But, David, if the heart
Be brass, what boots the art
Of exorcising wrong,
Of harping to a song?

The sceptre and the ring
And every royal thing
Will fail. Grief's lustiness
Must cure the harp's distress.

TALISMAN

Under a splintered mast,
Torn from ship and cast
Near her hull,
A stumbling shepherd found
Embedded in the ground,
A sea-gull

Of lapis lazuli,
A scarab of the sea,
With wings spread—
Curling its coral feet,
Parting its beak to greet
Men long dead.

" SUN! "

Hope and Fear—those internecine fighters—accost him

" No man may him hyde
From Deth holow-eyed; "
This, for us mortal truth, for us shall not suffice.
You are not male or female, but a plan
Deep-set within the heart of man.
Splendid with splendor hid you come, from your Arab abode,
A fiery topaz smothered in the hand of a great prince who rode
Before you, Sun—whom you outran,
Piercing his caravan.

O Sun, you shall stay
With us. Holiday
And day of wrath shall be as one, wound in a device
Of Moorish gorgeousness, round glasses spun
To flame as hemispheres of one
Great hourglass dwindling to a stem. Consume hostility;
Employ your weapon in this meeting-place of surging enmity!
Insurgent feet shall not outrun
Multiplied flames, O Sun.

A GRAVEYARD

Man, looking into the sea—
taking the view from those who have as much right to it as you
have to it yourself—
it is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing
but you cannot stand in the middle of this:
the sea has nothing to give but a well excavated grave.
The firs stand in a procession, each with an emerald turkey-foot
at the top;
reserved as their contours, saying nothing.
Repression, however, is not the most obvious characteristic of the
sea;

the sea is a collector, quick to return a rapacious look.
There are others beside you who have worn that look,
whose expression is no longer a protest. The fish no longer investigate them,
for their bones have not lasted:
men lower nets, unconscious of the fact that they are desecrating a grave,
and row quickly away; the blades of the oars
moving together like the feet of water-spiders as if there were no such thing as death.
The wrinkles progress upon themselves in a phalanx, beautiful under networks of foam,
and fade breathlessly while the sea rustles in and out of the seaweed.
The birds swim through the air at top speed, emitting cat-calls as heretofore;
the tortoise-shell scourges about the feet of the cliffs, in motion beneath them;
and the ocean, under the pulsation of light-houses and noise of bell-buoys,
advances as usual, looking as if it were not that ocean in which dropped things are bound to sink—
in which, if they turn and twist, it is neither with volition or consciousness.

John G. Neihardt

PRAYER FOR PAIN

I do not pray for peace nor ease,
  Nor truce from sorrow:
No suppliant on servile knees
  Begs here against to-morrow!

Lean flame against lean flame we flash,
  O Fates that meet me fair;
Blue steel against blue steel we clash—
  Lay on, and I shall dare!

But Thou of deeps the awful Deep,
Thou Breather in the clay,
Grant this my only prayer—Oh, keep
My soul from turning gray!

For until now, whatever wrought
Against my sweet desires,
My days were smitten harps strung taut,
My nights were slumbrous lyres.

And howso'er the hard blow rang
Upon my battered shield,
Some lark-like, soaring spirit sang
Above my battle-field.

And through my soul of stormy night
The zigzag blue flame ran.
I asked no odds—I fought my fight—
Events against a man.

But now—at last—the gray mist chokes
And numbs me. Leave me pain!
Oh, let me feel the biting strokes,
That I may fight again!

ENVOI

Oh, seek me not within a tomb—
Thou shalt not find me in the clay!
I pierce a little wall of gloom
To mingle with the day!

I brothered with the things that pass,
Poor giddy joy and puckered grief;
I go to brother with the grass
And with the sunning leaf.

Not death can sheathe me in a shroud;
A joy-sword whetted keen with pain,
I join the armies of the cloud,
The lightning and the rain.

Oh, subtle in the sap athrill,
Athletic in the glad uplift,
A portion of the cosmic will,
I pierce the planet-drift.

My God and I shall interknit
As rain and ocean, breath and air;
And oh, the luring thought of it
Is prayer!

Robert Nichols

BY THE WOOD

How still the day is, and the air how bright!
A thrush sings and is silent in the wood;
The hillside sleeps dizzy with heat and light;
A rhythmic murmur fills the quietude;
A woodpecker prolongs his leisured flight,
Rising and falling on the solitude.

But there are those who far from yon wood lie,
Buried within the trench where all were found.
A weight of mold oppresses every eye,
Within that cabin close their limbs are bound;
And there they rot amid the long profound
Disastrous silence of grey earth and sky.

These once too rested where now rests but one
Who scarce can lift his panged and heavy head,
Who drinks in grief the hot light of the sun,
Whose eyes watch dully the green branches spread,
Who feels his currents ever slowlier run,
Whose lips repeat a silent . . . "Dead! all dead!"

Oh, youths to come shall drink air warm and bright,
  Shall hear the bird cry in the sunny wood.
All my Young England fell today in fight:
  That bird, that wood, was ransomed by our blood!

I pray you, when the drum rolls let your mood
  Be worthy of our deaths and your delight.

NEARER

Nearer and ever nearer . . .
  My body, tired but tense,
Hovers 'twixt vague pleasure
  And tremulous confidence.

Arms to have and to use them,
  And a soul to be made
Worthy, if not worthy;
  If afraid, unafraid.

To endure for a little,
  To endure and have done:
Men I love about me,
  Over me the sun!

And should at last suddenly
  Fly the speeding death,
The four great quarters of heaven
  Receive this little breath.

Yone Noguchi

THE POET

Out of the deep and the dark,
A sparkling mystery, a shape,
Something perfect,
Comes like the stir of the day:
One whose breath is an odor,
Whose eyes show the road to stars,
The breeze in his face,
The glory of heaven on his back.
He steps like a vision hung in air,
Diffusing the passion of eternity;
His abode is the sunlight of morn,
The music of eve his speech:
In his sight,
One shall turn from the dust of the grave,
And move upward to the woodland.

I HAVE CAST THE WORLD

I have cast the world,
and think me as nothing.
Yet I feel cold on snow-falling day,
And happy on flower day.

HOKKU

Bits of song—what else?
I, a rider of the stream,
Lone between the clouds.

LINES

When I am lost in the deep body of the mist on a hill,
The universe seems built with me as its pillar.

Am I the god upon the face of the deep—nay, deepless deepness
in the beginning?

Grace Fallow Norton

ALLEGRA AGONISTES

A gleam of gold in gloom and gray,
A call from out a fairer day.
O pang at heart and ebbing blood!
(Hush, bread and salt should be thy mood,
Stern woman of the Brotherhood.)

Clamor of golden tones and tunes,
Hunt of faint horns, breath of bassoons;
They wound my soul again; I lie
Face earthward in fresh agony.
Oh, give me joy before I die!

World, world, I could have danced for thee,
And I had tales and minstrelsy;
Kept fairer, I had been more good.
(Hush, bread and salt should be thy mood,
Soul of the breadless Brotherhood.)

Some thou hast formed to play thy part,
The bold, the cold, the hard of heart.
Thy rue upon my lips I toss.
Rose was my right. O world, the loss,
When Greek limbs writhe upon the cross!

MAKE NO VOWS

I made a vow once, one only.
I was young and I was lonely.
When I grew strong I said: "This vow
Is too narrow for me now.
Who am I to be bound by old oaths?
I will change them as I change my clothes!"

But that ancient outworn vow
Was like fetters upon me now.
It was hard to break, hard to break;
Hard to shake from me, hard to shake.

I broke it by day, but it closed upon me at night.
He is not free who is free only in the sunlight.
He is not free who bears fetters in his dreams,
Nor he who laughs only by dark dream-fed streams.

Oh, it costs much bright coin of strength to live!
Watch, then, where all your strength you give!
For I, who would be so wild and wondrous now,
Must give, give, to break a burdening bitter vow.

I GIVE THANKS

There's one that I once loved so much
  I am no more the same.
I give thanks for that transforming touch.
  I tell you not his name.

He has become a sign to me
  For flowers and for fire.
For song he is a sign to me
  And for the broken lyre.

And I have known him in a book
  And never touched his hand.

And he is dead—I need not look
For him through his green land.

Heaven may not be. I have no faith,
But this desire I have—
To take my soul on my last breath,
To lift it like a wave,

And surge unto his star and say,
His friendship had been heaven;
And pray, for clouds that closed his day
May light at last be given!

And say, he shone at noon so bright
I learned to run and rejoice!
And beg him for one last delight—
The true sound of his voice.

There's one that once moved me so much
I am no more the same;
And I pray I too, I too, may touch
Some heart with singing flame.

James Oppenheim

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains. . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,
By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself. . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

THE LONELY CHILD

Do you think, my boy, when I put my arms around you
To still your fears,
That it is I who conquer the dark and the lonely night?

My arms seem to wrap love about you,
As your little heart fluttering at my breast
Throbs love through me . . .

But, dear one, it is not your father:
Other arms are about you, drawing you near,
And drawing the earth near, and the night near,
And your father near. . . .

Some day you shall lie alone at nights,
As now your father lies;
And in those arms, as a leaf fallen on a tranquil stream,
Drift into dreams and healing sleep.

NOT OVERLOOKED

Though I am little as all little things,
Though the stars that pass over my tininess are as the sands of the sea,
Though the garment of the night was made for a sky-giant and does not fit me,
Though even in a city of men I am as nothing,
Yet at times the gift of life is almost more than I can bear. . . .
I laugh with joyousness, the morning is a blithe holiday;
And in the overrunning of my hardy bliss praise rises for the very breath I breathe.

How soaked the universe is with life—
Not a cranny but is drenched!
Ah, not even I was overlooked!

THE RUNNER IN THE SKIES

Who is the runner in the skies—
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our earth and sun hovering like bees about her blossoming heart!
Her feet are on the winds where space is deep;
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
She hurries through the night to a far lover.

Patrick Orr

ANNIE SHORE AND JOHNNIE DOON

Annie Shore, 'twas, sang last night
Down in South End saloon;
A tawdry creature in the light—
Painted cheeks, eyes over-bright,
Singing a dance-hall tune.

I'd be forgetting Annie's singing—
I'd not have thought again—
But for the thing that cried and fluttered
Through all the shrill refrain:
Youth crying above foul words, cheap music,
And innocence in pain.

They sentenced Johnnie Doon today
For murder, stark and grim;
Death's none too dear a price, they say,
For such-like men as him to pay;
No need to pity him!

And Johnnie Doon I'd not be pitying—
I could forget him now—
But for the childish look of trouble
That fell across his brow,
For the twisting hands he looked at dumbly
As if they'd sinned, he knew not how.

IN THE MOHAVE

As I rode down the arroyo through yuccas belled with bloom,
I saw a last year's stalk lift dried hands to the light;
Like age at prayer for death within a careless room,
Like one by day o'ertaken, whose sick desire is night.

And as I rode I saw a lean coyote lying
All perfect as in life upon a silver dune,
Save that his feet no more could flee the harsh light's spying,
Save that no more his shadow would cleave the sinking moon.

O cruel land, where form endures, the spirit fled!
You chill the sun for me with your gray sphinx's smile,
Brooding in the bright silence above your captive dead,
Where beat the heart of life so brief, so brief a while!

Seumas O'Sullivan

MY SORROW

My sorrow that I am not by the little dun,
By the lake of the starlings at Rosse's under the hill—
And the larks there, singing over the fields of dew,
Or evening there, and the sedges still!
For plain I see now the length of the yellow sand,
And Lissadell far off and its leafy ways,
And the holy mountain whose mighty heart
Gathers into it all the colored days.
My sorrow that I am not by the little dun,
By the lake of the starlings at evening when all is still—
And still in whispering sedges the herons stand.
'Tis there I would nestle at rest till the quivering moon
Uprose in the golden quiet over the hill.

SPLENDID AND TERRIBLE

Splendid and terrible your love.
The searing pinions of its flight
Flamed but a moment's space above
The place where ancient memories keep
Their quiet; and the dreaming deep
Moved inly with a troubled light,
And that old passion woke and stirred
Out of its sleep.

Splendid and terrible your love.
I hold it to me like a flame;
I hold it like a flame above
The empty anguish of my breast.
There let it stay, there let it rest—
Deep in the heart whereto it came
Of old as some wind-wearied bird
Drops to its nest.

THE OTHERS

From our hidden places,
  By a secret path,
We come in the moonlight
  To the side of the green rath.

There the night through
  We take our pleasure,
Dancing to such a measure
  As earth never knew.

To dance and lilt
  And song without a name,
So sweetly chanted
  'Twould put a bird to shame.

And many a maiden
  Is there, of mortal birth,
Her young eyes laden
  With dreams of earth.

Music so piercing wild
  And forest-sweet would bring
Silence on blackbirds singing
  Their best in the ear of spring.

And many a youth entrancèd
  Moves slow in the dreamy round,
His brave lost feet enchanted
  With the rhythm of faery sound.

Oh, many a thrush and blackbird
  Would fall to the dewy ground,
And pine away in silence
  For envy of such a sound.

So the night through,
  In our sad pleasure,
We dance to many a measure
  That earth never knew.

Wilfred Owen

STRANGE MEETING

It seemed that out of the battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which Titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.
And by his smile I knew that sullen hall:

With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
" Strange friend," I said, " here is no cause to mourn."
" None," said the other, " but the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something has been left
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Courage was mine, and I had mystery;
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery;
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels,
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint,
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now . . ."

ARMS AND THE BOY

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade
How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood;
Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;
And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind blunt bullet-heads
Which long to muzzle in the hearts of lads.
Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth,
Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple.
There lurk no claws behind his fingers supple;
And God will grow no talons at his heels,
Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls.

THE ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who died as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers or bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs—
The shrill demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-bys.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds.
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

APOLOGIA PRO POEMATE MEO

I too saw God through mud—
The mud that cracked on cheeks when wretches smiled.
War brought more glory to their eyes than blood,
And gave their laughs more glee than shakes a child.

Merry it was to laugh there—
Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.
For power was on us as we slashed bones bare
Not to feel sickness or remorse of murder.

I too have dropped off fear—
Behind the barrage, dead as my platoon;
And sailed, my spirit surging, light and clear,
Past the entanglement where hopes lay strewn;

And witnessed exultation—
Faces that used to curse me, scowl for scowl,
Shine and light up with passion of oblation—
Seraphic for an hour; though they were foul.

I have made fellowships—
Untold of happy lovers in old song.
For love is not the binding of fair lips
With the soft silk of eyes that look and long,

By Joy, whose ribbon slips:
But wound with war's hard wire whose stakes are strong;
Bound with the bandage of the arm that drips;
Knit in the welding of the rifle-thong.

I have perceived much beauty
In the hoarse oaths that kept our courage straight;
Heard music in the silentness of duty;
Found peace where shell-storms spouted reddest spate.

Nevertheless, except you share
With them in hell the sorrowful dark of hell,

Whose world is but the trembling of a flare,
And heaven but as the highway for a shell,

You shall not hear their mirth:
You shall not come to think them well content
By any jest of mine. These men are worth
Your tears; you are not worth their merriment.

November, 1917

Josephine Preston Peabody

CRADLE SONG

I

Lord Gabriel, wilt thou not rejoice
When at last a little boy's
Cheek lies heavy as a rose,
And his eyelids close?

Gabriel, when that hush may be,
This sweet hand all heedfully
I'll undo, for thee alone,
From his mother's own.

Then the far blue highways, paven
With the burning stars of heaven,
He shall gladden with the sweet
Hasting of his feet—

Feet so brightly bare and cool,
Leaping, as from pool to pool;
From a little laughing boy
Splashing rainbow joy!

Gabriel, wilt thou understand
How to keep his hovering hand—
Never shut, as in a bond,
From the bright beyond?

Nay, but though it cling and close
Tightly as a clinging rose,
  Clasp it only so—aright,
  Lest his heart take fright.

(*Dormi, dormi, tu;*
The dusk is hung with blue.)

II

Lord Michael, wilt not thou rejoice
When at last a little boy's
  Heart, a shut-in murmuring bee,
  Turns him into thee?

Wilt thou heed thine armor well—
To take his hand from Gabriel,
  So his radiant cup of dream
  May not spill a gleam?

He will take thy heart in thrall,
Telling o'er thy breastplate, all
  Colors, in his bubbling speech,
  With his hand to each.

(*Dormi, dormi, tu,*
Sapphire is the blue;
Pearl and beryl, they are ca'led,
Chrysoprase and emerald,
Sard and amethyst.
Numbered so, and kissed.)

Ah, but find some angel-word
For thy sharp, subduing sword!
  Yea, Lord Michael, make no doubt
  He will find it out:

(*Dormi, dormi, tu!*)
  His eyes will look at you.

III

Last, a little morning space,
Lead him to that leafy place
  Where Our Lady sits awake,
  For all mothers' sake.

Bosomed with the Blessèd One,
He shall mind her of her Son,
  Once so folded from all harms,
  In her shrining arms.

(*In her veil of blue,*
Dormi, dormi, tu.)

  So—and fare thee well.
  Softly—Gabriel . . .
When the first faint red shall come,
Bid the Day-star lead him home—
  For the bright world's sake—
  To my heart, awake.

THE CEDARS

All down the years the fragrance came,
The mingled fragrance, with a flame,
Of cedars breathing in the sun,
The cedar-trees of Lebanon.

O thirst of song in bitter air,
And hope, wing-hurt from iron care,
What balm of myrrh and honey, won
From far-off trees of Lebanon!

Not from these eyelids yet have I
Ever beheld that early sky.
Why do they call me through the sun?—
Even the trees of Lebanon?

A SONG OF SOLOMON

King Solomon was the wisest man
  Of all that have been kings.
He built an House unto the Lord;
  And he sang of creeping things.

Of creeping things, of things that fly,
  Or swim within the seas;
Of the little weed along the wall,
  And of the cedar-trees.

And happier he, without mistake,
  Than all men since alive.
God's House he built; and he did make
  A thousand songs and five.

Padraic Pearse

IDEAL

Naked I saw thee,
O beauty of beauty!
And I blinded my eyes
For fear I should flinch.

I heard thy music,
O sweetness of sweetness!
And I shut my ears
For fear I should fail.

I kissed thy lips,
O sweetness of sweetness!
And I hardened my heart
For fear of my ruin.

I blinded my eyes,
And my ears I shut;
I hardened my heart
And my love I quenched.

I turned my back
On the dream I had shaped,
And to this road before me
My face I turned.

I set my face
To the road here before me,
To the work that I see,
To the death that I shall meet.
(*Translated from the Irish by Thomas MacDonagh.*)

LULLABY OF A WOMAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

O little head of gold! O candle of my house!
Thou will be a guide to all who travel this country.

Be quiet, O house! And O little grey mice,
Stay at home tonight in your hidden lairs!

O moths on the window, fold your wings!
Cease your droning, O little black chafers!

O plover and O curlew, over my house do not travel!
Speak not, O barnacle-goose, going over the mountain here!

O creatures of the mountain, that wake so early,
Stir not tonight till the sun whitens over you!
(*Translated from the Irish by Thomas MacDonagh.*)

LONG TO ME THY COMING

Long to me thy coming,
Old henchman of God,
O friend of all friends,
To free me from my pain.

O syllable on the wind,
O footfall not heavy,
O hand in the dark,
Your coming is long to me.

A RANN I MADE

A rann I made within my heart
To the rider, to the high king,
A rann I made to my love,
To the king of kings, ancient death.

Brighter to me than light of day
The dark of thy house, though black clay;
Sweeter to me than the music of trumpets
The quiet of thy house and its eternal silence.

Ezra Pound

Δώρια

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs
And of gray waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter—
the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

THE RETURN

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering!

See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear, as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back;
These were the "Wing'd-with-Awe,"
inviolable.

Gods of the wingèd shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry;
These the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men!

PICCADILLY

Beautiful tragical faces!
Ye that were whole, and are so sunken;
And, O ye vile, ye that might have been loved,
That are so sodden and drunken,
Who hath forgotten you?

O wistful, fragile faces, few out of many!

The crass, the coarse, the brazen,
God knows I cannot pity them, perhaps, as I should do;
But oh, ye delicate, wistful faces,
Who hath forgo ten you?

N. Y.

My City, my beloved, my white!
Ah, slender,
Listen! Listen to me, and I will breathe into thee a soul.
Delicately upon the reed, attend me!

Now do I know that I am mad,
For here are a million people surly with traffic;
This is no maid.
Neither could I play upon any reed if I had one.

My City, my beloved,
Thou art a maid with no breasts,
Thou art slender as a silver reed.
Listen to me, attend me!
And I will breathe into thee a soul,
And thou shalt live for ever.

THE COMING OF WAR: ACTAEON

An image of Lethe,
and the fields
Full of faint light
but golden,
Gray cliffs,
and beneath them
A sea
Harsher than granite,
unstill, never ceasing;

High forms
with the movement of gods,

Perilous aspect.
And one said:
"This is Actaeon."
Actaeon of golden greaves!

Over fair meadows,
Over the cool face of that field,
Unstill, ever moving,
Host of an ancient people,
The silent cortège.

THE GARDEN

En robe de parade. Samain

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens,
And she is dying piece-meal
of a sort of emotional anemia.

And round about there is a rabble
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.
She would like someone to speak to her,
And is almost afraid that I
will commit that indiscretion.

ORTUS

How have I labored?
How have I not labored
To bring her soul to birth,
To give these elements a name and a centre!

She is beautiful as the sunlight, and as fluid.
She has no name, and no place.

How have I labored to bring her soul into separation;
To give her a name and her being!

Surely you are bound and entwined,
You are mingled with the elements unborn;
I have loved a stream and a shadow.

I beseech you enter your life.
I beseech you learn to say "I"
When I question you:
For you are no part, but a whole;
No portion, but a being.

THE CHOICE

It is true that you say the gods are more use to you than fairies,
But for all that I have seen you on a high, white, noble horse,
Like some strange queen in a story.

It is odd that you should be covered with long robes and trailing tendrils and flowers;
It is odd that you should be changing your face and resembling some other woman to plague me;
It is odd that you should be hiding yourself in the cloud of beautiful women, who do not concern me.

And I, who follow every seed-leaf upon the wind!
They will say that I deserve this.

THE GARRET

Come let us pity those who are better off than we are.
Come, my friend, and remember
that the rich have butlers and no friends,
And we have friends and no butlers.
Come let us pity the married and the unmarried.

Dawn enters with little feet
like a gilded Pavlova,
And I am near my desire.
Nor has life in it aught better
Than this hour of clear coolness,
the hour of waking together.

DANCE FIGURE

For the Marriage in Cana of Galilee

Dark-eyed,
O woman of my dreams,
Ivory-sandaled,
There is none like thee among the dancers,
None with swift feet.

I have not found thee in the tents,
In the broken darkness.
I have not found thee at the well-head
Among the women with pitchers.

Thine arms are as a young sapling under the bark;
Thy face as a river with lights.

White as an almond are thy shoulders;
As new almonds stripped from the husk.

They guard thee not with eunuchs;
Not with bars of copper.
Gilt turquoise and silver are in the place of thy rest.
A brown robe, with threads of gold woven in patterns,
hast thou gathered about thee,
O Nathat-Ikanaie, "Tree-a -the-river."

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon me;
Thy fingers a frosted stream.

Thy maidens are white like pebbles;
Their music about thee—

There is none like thee among the dancers;
None with swift feet.

FROM "NEAR PÉRIGORD"

Ed eran due in uno, ed uno in due.
Inferno, XXVIII, 125

I loved a woman. The stars fell from heaven.
And always our two natures were in strife.
Bewildering spring, and by the Auvezère
Poppies and day's eyes in the green émail
Rose over us; and we knew all that stream,
And our two horses had traced out the valleys;
Knew the low flooded lands squared out with poplars,
In the young days when the deep sky befriended.

And great wings beat above us in the twilight,
And the great wheels in heaven
Bore us together . . . surging . . . and apart . . .
Believing we should meet with lips and hands.

High, high and sure . . . and then the counterthrust:
"Why do you love me? Will you always love me?
But I am like the grass, I can not love you."
Or, "Love, and I love and love you,
And hate your mind, not *you*, your soul, your hands."

So to this last estrangement, Tairiran!

There shut up in his castle, Tairiran's,
She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her hands,
Gone—ah, gone—untouched, unreachable!
She who could never live save through one person,
She who could never speak save to one person,
And all the rest of her a shifting change,
A broken bundle of mirrors . . . !

AN IMMORALITY

Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

THE STUDY IN AESTHETICS

The very small children in patched clothing,
Being smitten with an unusual wisdom,
Stopped in their play as she passed them
And cried up from their cobbles:
Guarda! Ahi, guarda! ch'e be'a!

But three years after this
I heard the young Dante, whose last name I do not know—
For there are, in Sirmoine, twenty-eight young Dantes and thirty-four Catulli;
And there had been a great catch of sardines,
And his elders
Were packing them in the great wooden boxes
For the market in Brescia, and he
Leapt about, snatching at the bright fish
And getting in both of their ways;
And in vain they commanded him to *sta fermo!*
And when they would not let him arrange
The fish in the boxes
He stroked those which were already arranged,

Murmuring for his own satisfaction
This identical phrase:
Ch'e be'a.

And at this I was mildly abashed.

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS

Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions.
Let us express our envy for the man with a steady job
and no worry about the future.

You are very idle, my songs;
I fear you will come to a bad end.

You stand about the streets.
You loiter at the corners and bus-stops,
You do next to nothing at all.
You do not even express our inner nobilities;
You will come to a very bad end.

And I? I have gone half cracked.
I have talked to you so much
that I almost see you about me,
Insolent little beasts! Shameless! Devoid of clothing!

But you, newest song of the lot,
You are not old enough to have done much mischief.
I will get you a green coat out of China
With dragons worked upon it.
I will get you the scarlet silk trousers
From the statue of the infant Christ at Santa Maria Novella;
Lest they say we are lacking in taste,
Or that there is no caste in this family.

VILLANELLE: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HOUR

I

I had over-prepared the event—
that much was ominous.
With middle-aging care
I had laid out just the right books,
I had almost turned down the pages.

Beauty is so rare a thing . . .
So few drink of my fountain.

So much barren regret!
So many hours wasted!
And now I watch from the window
the rain, the wandering busses.

Their little cosmos is shaken—
the air is alive with that fact.
In their parts of the city
they are played on by diverse forces;
How do I know?
Oh, I know well enough—
For them there is something afoot.

As for me,
I had over-prepared the event.

Beauty is so rare a thing . . .
So few drink at my fountain.

Two friends: a breath of the forest . . .
Friends? Are people less friends
because one has just, at last, found them?

Twice they promised to come.
"Between the night and morning?"

Beauty would drink of my mind.
Youth would awhile forget
my youth is gone from me.
Youth would hear speech of beauty.

II

(" Speak up! You have danced so stiffly?
Someone admired your works,
And said so frankly.

" Did you talk like a fool,
The first night?
The second evening? "

" *But* they promised again:
' Tomorrow at tea-time.' ")

III

Now the third day is here—
no word from either;
No word from her nor him,
Only another man's note:
" Dear Pound, I am leaving England."

BALLAD OF THE GOODLY FERE

Simon Zelotes speaketh it somewhile after the Crucifixion

Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
" First let these go! " quo' our Goodly Fere,
" Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
" Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town? " says he.

Oh we drunk his " Hale " in the good red wine
When we last made company.
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere,
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no' get him a' in a book, I think,
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
" I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
" Though I go to the gallows tree."

" Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead," says he.
" Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I have seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free.
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue,
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee.
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the gray o' the sea.

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging,
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Genseret
Wi' twey words spoke suddently.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea.
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God, is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as maid to man—
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe
that plays behind the veil,
To meet your God as the night winds meet
beyond Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword-blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God, is a gallant foe
that playeth behind the veil.
Whom God deigns not to overthrow
hath need of triple mail.

LA FRAISNE

Scene: *The Ash Wood of Malvern*

For I was a gaunt grave councillor,
Being in all things wise, and very old;
But I have put aside this folly and the cold
That old age weareth for a cloak.

I was quite strong—at least they said so—
The young men at the sword-play;
But I have put aside this folly, being gay
In another fashion that more suiteth me.

I have curled mid the boles of the ash wood,
I have hidden my face where the oak
Spread his leaves over me, and the yoke
Of the old ways of men have I cast aside.

By the still pool of Mar-nan-otha
Have I found me a bride
That was a dog-wood tree some syne.
She hath called me from mine old ways;
She hath hushed my rancor of council,
Bidding me praise
Naught but the wind that flutters in the leaves.

She hath drawn me from mine old ways,
Till men say that I am mad;
But I have seen the sorrow of men, and am glad,
For I know that the wailing and bitterness are a folly.
And I? I have put aside all folly and all grief.
I wrapped my tears in an ellum leaf
And left them under a stone;
And now men call me mad because I have thrown
All folly from me, putting it aside
To leave the old barren ways of men,
Because my bride
Is a pool of the wood; and
Though all men say that I am mad
It is only that I am glad—
Very glad, for my bride hath toward me a great love
That is sweeter than the love of women
That plague and burn and drive one away.

Aie-e! 'Tis true that I am gay,
Quite gay, for I have her alone here
And no man troubleth us.

Once when I was among the young men . . .
And they said I was quite strong, among the young men . . .
Once there was a woman . . .
. . . but I forget . . . she was . . .
. . . I hope she will not come again.

. . . I do not remember . . .
I think she hurt me once, but . . .
That was very long ago.

I do not like to remember things any more.

I like one little band of winds that blow
In the ash trees here:
For we are quite alone,
Here 'mid the ash trees.

THE RIVER-MERCHANT'S WIFE: A LETTER

From the Chinese of Li Po

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse;
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling;
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever, and forever.
Why should I climb the look-out?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-Yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.
You dragged your feet when you went out.
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August
Over the grass in the west garden—
They hurt me.
I grow older.
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you,
  As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

EXILE'S LETTER

From the Chinese of Li Po; written by him while in exile about 760 A. D., to the Hereditary War Councillor of Sho, "recollecting former companionship."

To So-Kin of Rakuho, ancient friend, Chancellor of Gen.
Now I remember that you built me a special tavern,
By the south side of the bridge at Ten-Shin.
With yellow gold and white jewels we paid for songs and laughter,
And we were drunk for month on month, forgetting the kings and
princes.
Intelligent men came drifting in, from the sea and from the west
border,
And with them, and with you especially,
There was nothing at cross-purpose;
And they made nothing of sea-crossing or of mountain-crossing,
If only they could be of that fellowship.
And we all spoke out our hearts and minds, and without regret.

And then I was sent off to South Wei, smothered in laurel groves,
And you to the north of Raku-hoku,
Till we had nothing but thoughts and memories in common,
And then, when separation had come to its worst,
We met, and travelled together into Sen-Go
Through all the thirty-six folds of the turning and twisting waters;
Into a valley of a thousand bright flowers . . .
That was the first valley,
And into ten thousand valleys, full of voices and pine-winds.
And with silver harness and reins of gold,
Out came the East-of-Kan foreman and his company;
And there came also the "True-man" of Shi-yo to meet me,
Playing on a jeweled mouth-organ.
In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us more Sennin music;
Many instruments, like the sound of young phœnix broods.
And the foreman of Kan-Chu, drunk, danced
Because his long sleeves wouldn't keep still
With that music playing.

And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with my head on his lap,
And my spirit so high it was all over the heavens.

And before the end of the day we were scattered like stars or rain.
I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,
You back to your river-bridge.
And your father, who was brave as a leopard,
Was governor in Hei Shu and put down the barbarian rabble.
And one May he had you send for me, despite the long distance;
And what with broken wheels and so on, I won't say it wasn't hard going . . .
Over roads twisted like sheep's guts.
And I was still going, late in the year, in the cutting wind from the north,
And thinking how little you cared for the cost . . . and you caring enough to pay it.

Then what a reception!
Red jade cups, food well set on a blue jeweled table;
And I was drunk, and had no thought of returning;
And you would walk out with me to the western corner of the castle,
To the dynastic temple, with water about it clear as blue jade,
With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-organs and drums,
With ripples like dragon-scales going grass-green on the water,
Pleasure lasting, with courtezans going and coming without hindrance,
With the willow-flakes falling like snow,
And the vermilioned girls getting drunk about sunset,
And the water a hundred feet deep reflecting green eye-brows—
Eyebrows painted green are a fine sight in young moonlight,
Gracefully painted—and the girls singing back at each other,
Dancing in transparent brocade,
And the wind lifting the song, and interrupting it,
Tossing it up under the clouds.

And all this comes to an end,
And is not again to be met with.
I went up to the court for examination,
Tried Layu's luck, offered the Choyu song,
And got no promotion,

And went back to the East Mountains white-headed.
And once again, later, we met at the south bridge-head.
And then the crowd broke up—you went north to San palace.
And if you ask how I regret that parting:
It is like the flowers falling at spring's end, confused, whirled in a tangle.
What is the use of talking! And there is no end of talking—
There is no end of things in the heart.

I call in the boy,
Have him sit on his knees here to seal this,
And I send it a thousand miles, thinking.

(*Translated by Ezra Pound from the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa and the deciphering of the Professors Mori and Araga.*)

John Reed

SANGAR

To Lincoln Steffens

Somewhere I read a strange old rusty tale
Smelling of war; most curiously named
The Mad Recreant Knight of the West.
Once, you have read, the round world brimmed with hate,
Stirred and revolted, flashed unceasingly
Facets of cruel splendor. And the strong
Harried the weak . . .
Long past, long past, praise God,
In these fair, peaceful, happy days.

The Tale:

Eastward the Huns break border,
Surf on a rotten dyke;
They have murdered the Eastern Warder
(His head on a pike).
"Arm thee, arm thee, my father!
Swift rides the Goddes-bane,
And the high nobles gather
On the plain!"

"O blind world-wrath!" cried Sangar,
"Greatly I killed in youth;
I dreamed men had done with anger
Through Goddes truth!"
Smiled the boy then in faint scorn,
Hard with the battle-thrill;
"Arm thee, loud calls the war-horn
And shrill!"

He has bowed to the voice stentorian,
Sick with thought of the grave—
He has called for his battered morion
And his scarred glaive.
On the boy's helm a glove
Of the Duke's daughter—
In his eyes splendor of love
And slaughter.

Hideous the Hun advances
Like a sea-tide on sand;
Unyielding, the haughty lances
Make dauntless stand.
And ever amid the clangor,
Butchering Hun and Hun,
With sorrowful face rides Sangar
And his son. . . .

Broken is the wild invader
(Sullied, the whole world's fountains);
They have penned the murderous raider
With his back to the mountains.
Yet though what had been mead
Is now a bloody lake,
Still drink swords where men bleed,
Nor slake.

Now leaps one into the press—
The hell 'twixt front and front—
Sangar, bloody and torn of dress
(He has borne the brunt).

"Hold!" cries, "Peace! God's peace!
Heed ye what Christus says—"
And the wild battle gave surcease
In amaze.

"When will ye cast out hate?
Brothers—my mad, mad brothers—
Mercy, ere it be too late,
These are sons of your mothers.
For sake of Him who died on Tree,
Who of all creatures, loved the least—"
"Blasphemer! God of Battles, He!"
Cried a priest.

"Peace!" and with his two hands
Has broken in twain his glaive.
Weaponless, smiling he stands—
(Coward or brave?)
"Traitor!" howls one rank, "Think ye
The Hun be our brother?"
And "Fear we to die, craven, think ye?"
The other.

Then sprang his son to his side,
His lips with slaver were wet,
For he had felt how men died
And was lustful yet;
(On his bent helm a glove
Of the Duke's daughter,
In his eyes splendor of love
And slaughter)—

Shouting, "Father no more of mine—
Shameful old man—abhorr'd
First traitor of all our line!"
Up the two-handed sword.
He smote—fell Sangar—and then
Screaming, red, the boy ran
Straight at the foe, and again
Hell began. . . .

Oh, there was joy in Heaven when Sangar came.
Sweet Mary wept, and bathed and bound his wounds,
And God the Father healed him of despair,
And Jesus gripped his hand, and laughed and laughed. . . .

PROUD NEW YORK

By proud New York and its man-piled Matterhorns,
The hard blue sky overhead and the west wind blowing,
Steam-plumes waving from sun-glittering pinnacles,
And deep streets shaking to the million-river:

Manhattan, zoned with ships, the cruel
  Youngest of all the world's great towns,
Thy bodice bright with many a jewel,
  Imperially crowned with crowns . . .

Who that has known thee but shall burn
  In exile till he come again
To do thy bitter will, O stern
  Moon of the tides of men!

Ernest Rhys

DAGONET'S CANZONET

A queen lived in the South;
And music was her mouth,
And sunshine was her hair,
By day, and all the night
The drowsy embers there
Remember'd still the light.
  My soul, was she not fair!

But for her eyes—they made
An iron man afraid;
Like sky-blue pools they were,
Watching the sky that knew

Itself transmuted there
Light blue, or deeper blue.
My soul, was she not fair!

The lifting of her hands
Made laughter in the lands
Where the sun is, in the South:
But my soul learnt sorrow there
In the secrets of her mouth,
Her eyes, her hands, her hair.
O soul, was she not fair!

A SONG OF HAPPINESS

Ah, Happiness:
Who called you " Earandel "?
(Winter-star, I think, that is);
And who can tell the lovely curve
By which you seem to come, then swerve
Before you reach the middle-earth?
And who is there can hold your wing,
Or bind you in your mirth,
Or win you with a least caress,
Or tear, or kiss, or anything—
Insensate Happiness?

Once I thought to have you
Fast there in a child:
All her heart she gave you,
Yet you would not stay.
Cruel, and careless,
Not half reconciled,
Pain you cannot bear.
When her yellow hair
Lay matted, every tress;
When those looks of hers
Were no longer hers,
You went—in a day
She wept you all away.

Once I thought to give
You, plighted holily—
No more fugitive,
Returning like the sea.
But they that share so well
Heaven must portion Hell
In their copartnery:
Care, ill fate, ill health,
Came we know not how
And broke our commonwealth.
Neither has you now.

Some wait you on the road,
Some in an open door
Look for the face you showed
Once there—no more.
You never wear the dress
You danced in yesterday;
Yet, seeming gone, you stay,
And come at no man's call.
Yet, laid for burial,
You lift up from the dead
Your laughing, spangled head.

Yes, once I did pursue
You, unpursuable;
Loved, longed for, hoped for you,
Blue-eyed and morning-brow'd.
Ah, lovely Happiness!
Now that I know you well,
I dare not speak aloud
Your fond name in a crowd;
Nor conjure you by night,
Nor pray at morning-light,
Nor count at all on you.

But, at a stroke, a breath—
After the fear of death,
Or bent beneath a load;

Yes, ragged in the dress
And houseless on the road,
I might surprise you there.
Yes, who of us shall say
When you will come, or where?
Ask children at their play,
The leaves upon the tree,
The ships upon the sea,
Or old men who survived,
And lived, and loved, and wived.
Ask sorrow to confess
Your sweet improvidence,
And prodigal expense
And cold economy,
Ah, lovely Happiness!

Lola Ridge

THE SONG

That day, in the slipping of torsos and straining flanks
On the bloodied ooze of fields plowed by the iron,
And the smoke, bluish near earth and bronze in the sunshine,
Floating like cotton-down;
And the harsh and terrible screaming,
And that strange vibration at the roots of us . . .
Desire, fierce like a song . . .
And we heard—do you remember?—
All the Red Cross bands on Fifth Avenue,
And bugles in little home towns,
And children's harmonicas bleating
AMERICA!

And after . . .
(Do you remember?)
The drollery of the wind on our faces,
And horizons reeling,

And the terror of the plain,
Heaving like a gaunt pelvis to the sun
Under us—threshing and twanging
Torn-up roots of the song?

IRON WINE

The ore in the crucible is pungent, smelling like acrid wine.
It is dusky red like the ebb of poppies,
And purple like the blood of elderberries.
Surely it is a strong wine—juice distilled of the fierce iron.
I am drunk of its fumes;
I feel its fiery flux
Diffusing, permeating,
Working some strange alchemy . . .
So that I turn aside from the goodly board,
So that I look askance upon the common cup,
And from the mouths of crucibles
Suck forth the acrid sap.

ALTITUDE

I wonder
How it would be here with you,
Where the wind,
That has shaken off its dust in low valleys,
Touches one cleanly
As with a new-washed hand;
And pain
Is as the remote hunger of droning things;
And anger
But a little silence
Sinking into the great silence.

TO E. A. R.

Centuries shall not deflect
Nor many suns
Absorb your stream,
Flowing immune and cold
Between the banks of snow;
Nor any wind
Carry the dust of cities
To your high waters,
That arise out of the peaks
And return again into the mountain,
And never descend.

DÉBRIS

I love those spirits
That men stand off and point at,
Or shudder and hood up their souls—
Those ruined ones,
Where Liberty has lodged an hour
And passed like flame,
Bursting asunder the too small house.

THE EDGE

I thought to die that night in the solitude
    where they would never find me . . .
But there was time . . .
And I lay quietly on the drawn knees of the mountain
    staring into the abyss.

I do not know how long . . .
I could not count the hours, they ran so fast—
Like little bare-foot urchins—shaking my hands away.
But I remember
Somewhere water trickled like a thin severed vein . . .
And a wind came out of the grass,
Touching me gently, tentatively, like a paw.

As the night grew
The gray cloud that had covered the sky like sackcloth
Fell in ashen folds about the hills,
Like hooded virgins pulling their cloaks about them . . .
There must have been a spent moon,
For the Tall One's veil held a shimmer of silver. . . .

That too I remember,
And the tenderly rocking mountain,
Silence,
And beating stars. . . .

Dawn
Lay like a waxen hand upon the world,
And folded hills
Broke into a sudden wonder of peaks, stemming clear and cold,
Till the Tall One bloomed like a lily,
Flecked with sun
Fine as a golden pollen.
It seemed a wind might blow it from the snow.

I smelled the raw sweet essences of things,
And heard spiders in the leaves,
And ticking of little feet
As tiny creatures came out of their doors
To see God pouring light into his star.

It seemed life held
No future and no past but this.

And I too got up stiffly from the earth
And held my heart up like a cup.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

THE PILASTER

The church has pieces jutting out
  Where corners of the walls begin.
I have one for my little house,
  And I can feel myself go in.

I feel myself go in the bricks,
  And I can see myself in there.
I'm always waiting all alone,
  I'm sitting on a little chair.

And I am sitting very still,
  And I am waiting on and on
For something that is never there,
  For something that is gone.

WATER NOISES

When I am playing by myself,
  And all the boys are lost around,
Then I can hear the water go—
  It makes a little talking sound.

Along the rocks below the tree,
  I see it ripple up and wink;
And I can hear it saying on,
  "And do you think? and do you think?"

A bug shoots by that snaps and ticks,
  And a bird flies up beside the tree
To go into the sky to sing.
  I hear it say, "Killdee, killdee!"

Or else a yellow cow comes down
  To splash a while and have a drink.
But when she goes I still can hear
  The water say, "And do you think?"

STRANGE TREE

Away beyond the Jarboe house
I saw a different kind of tree.
Its trunk was old and large and bent,
And I could feel it look at me.

The road was going on and on
Beyond, to reach some other place.
I saw a tree that looked at me,
And yet it did not have a face.

It looked at me with all its limbs;
It looked at me with all its bark.
The yellow wrinkles on its sides
Were bent and dark.

And then I ran to get away,
But when I stopped and turned to see,
The tree was bending to the side
And leaning out to look at me.

MY HEART

My heart is beating up and down,
Is walking like some heavy feet.
My heart is going every day,
And I can hear it jump and beat.

At night before I go to sleep
I feel it beating in my head;
I hear it jumping in my neck
And in the pillow on my bed.

And then I make some little words
To go along and say with it—
The men are sailing home from Troy,
And all the lamps are lit.

The men are sailing home from Troy,
And all the lamps are lit.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

THE MASTER

Lincoln as he appeared to one soon after the Civil War

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared—
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled,
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through;
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?—
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold—
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it wholly have been old.

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

JOHN GORHAM

"Tell me what you're doing over here, John Gorham—
Sighing hard and seeming to be sorry when you're not.
Make me laugh or let me go now, for long faces in the moonlight
Are a sign for me to say again a word that you forgot."

"I'm over here to tell you what the moon already
May have said or maybe shouted ever since a year ago;
I'm over here to tell you what you are, Jane Wayland,
And to make you rather sorry, I should say, for being so."

"Tell me what you're saying to me now, John Gorham,
Or you'll never see as much of me as ribbons any more;
I'll vanish in as many ways as I have toes and fingers,
And you'll not follow far for one where flocks have been before."

"I'm sorry now you never saw the flocks, Jane Wayland;
But you're the one to make of them as many as you need.
And then about the vanishing: it's I who mean to vanish;
And when I'm here no longer you'll be done with me indeed."

"That's a way to tell me what I am, John Gorham!
How am I to know myself until I make you smile?
Try to look as if the moon were making faces at you,
And a little more as if you meant to stay a little while."

"You are what it is that over rose-blown gardens
Makes a pretty flutter for a season in the sun.
You are what it is that with a mouse, Jane Wayland,
Catches him and lets him go and eats him up for fun."

"Sure I never took you for a mouse, John Gorham.
All you say is easy, but so far from being true
That I wish you wouldn't ever be again the one to think so;
For it isn't cats and butterflies that I would be to you."

"All your little animals are in one picture—
One I've had before me since a year ago tonight;

And the picture where they live will be of you, Jane Wayland,
Till you find a way to kill them or to keep them out of sight."

"Won't you ever see me as I am, John Gorham,
Leaving out the foolishness and all I never meant?
Somewhere in me there's a woman, if you know the way to find her—
Will you like me any better if I prove it and repent?"

"I doubt if I shall ever have the time, Jane Wayland;
And I dare say all this moonlight lying round us might as well
Fall for nothing on the shards of broken urns that are forgotten,
As on two that have no longer much of anything to tell."

RICHARD CORY

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

THE GROWTH OF LORRAINE

I

While I stood listening, discreetly dumb,
Lorraine was having the last word with me:
"I know," she said, "I know it, but you see
Some creatures are born fortunate, and some
Are born to be found out and overcome—
Born to be slaves, to let the rest go free;
And if I'm one of them (and I must be)
You may as well forget me and go home.

"You tell me not to say these things, I know,
But I should never try to be content:
I've gone too far; the life would be too slow.
Some could have done it—some girls have the stuff;
But I can't do it—I don't know enough.
I'm going to the devil." And she went.

II

I did not half believe her when she said
That I should never hear from her again;
Nor when I found a letter from Lorraine,
Was I surprised or grieved at what I read:
"Dear friend, when you find this, I shall be dead.
You are too far away to make me stop.
They say that one drop—think of it, one drop!—
Will be enough; but I'll take five instead.

"You do not frown because I call you friend;
For I would have you glad that I still keep
Your memory, and even at the end—
Impenitent, sick, shattered—cannot curse
The love that flings, for better or for worse,
This worn-out, cast-out flesh of mine to sleep."

CASSANDRA

I heard one who said: "Verily,
What word have I for children here?
Your Dollar is your only Word,
The wrath of it your only fear.

"You build it altars tall enough
To make you see, but you are blind;
You cannot leave it long enough
To look before you or behind.

"When Reason beckons you to pause,
You laugh and say that you know best;
But what it is you know, you keep
As dark as ingots in a chest.

"You laugh and answer, 'We are young;
Oh, leave us now, and let us grow:'
Not asking how much more of this
Will Time endure or Fate bestow.

"Because a few complacent years
Have made your peril of your pride,
Think you that you are to go on
Forever pampered and untried?

"What lost eclipse of history,
What bivouac of the marching stars,
Has given the sign for you to see
Millenniums and last great wars?

"What unrecorded overthrow
Of all the world has ever known,
Or ever been, has made itself
So plain to you, and you alone?

"Your Dollar, Dove and Eagle make
A Trinity that even you
Rate higher than you rate yourselves;
It pays, it flatters, and it's new.

"And though your very flesh and blood
Be what your Eagle eats and drinks,
You'll praise him for the best of birds,
Not knowing what the Eagle thinks.

"The power is yours, but not the sight;
You see not upon what you tread;
You have the ages for your guide,
But not the wisdom to be led.

"Think you to tread forever down
The merciless old verities?
And are you never to have eyes
To see the world for what it is?

"Are you to pay for what you have
With all you are?"—No other word
We caught, but with a laughing crowd
Moved on. None heeded, and few heard.

DEMOS

I

All you that are enamored of my name
And least intent on what most I require,
Beware; for my design and your desire,
Deplorably, are not as yet the same.
Beware, I say, the failure and the shame
Of losing that for which you now aspire
So blindly, and of hazarding entire
The gift that I was bringing when I came.

Give as I will, I cannot give you sight
Whereby to see that with you there are some
To lead you, and be led. But they are dumb
Before the wrangling and the shrill delight
Of your deliverance, that has not come,
And shall not, if I fail you—as I might.

II

So little have you seen of what awaits
Your fevered glimpse of a democracy
Confused and foiled with an equality
Not equal to the envy it creates,
That you see not how near you are the gates
Of an old king who listens fearfully
To you that are outside and are to be
The noisy lords of imminent estates.

Rather be then your prayer that you shall have
Your kingdom undishonored. Having all,
See not the great among you for the small
But hear their silence; for the few shall save
The many, or the many are to fall—
Still to be wrangling in a noisy grave.

MINIVER CHEEVY

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
  Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
  And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
  When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
  Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
  And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
  And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
  That made so many a name so fragrant:
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
  And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
  Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
  Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
  And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
  Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
  But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
  And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
  Scratched his head and kept on thinking:
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
  And kept on drinking.

EROS TURANNOS

She fears him, and will always ask
  What fated her to choose him;
She meets in his engaging mask
  All reasons to refuse him;
But what she meets and what she fears
Are less than are the downward years,
Drawn slowly to the foamless weirs
  Of age, were she to lose him.

Between a blurred sagacity
  That once had power to sound him,
And love, that will not let him be
  The seeker that she found him,
Her pride assuages her, almost,
As if it were alone the cost.
He sees that he will not be lost,
  And waits, and looks around him.

A sense of ocean and old trees
  Envelops and allures him;
Tradition, touching all he sees
  Beguiles and reassures him;
And all her doubts of what he says
Are dimmed with what she knows of days,
Till even prejudice delays,
  And fades—and she secures him.

The falling leaf inaugurates
  The reign of her confusion;
The pounding wave reverberates
  The crash of her illusion;
And home, where passion lived and died,
Becomes a place where she can hide—
While all the town and harbor-side
  Vibrate with her seclusion.

We tell you, tapping on our brows,
  The story as it should be,
As if the story of a house
  Were told, or ever could be.
We'll have no kindly veil between
Her visions and those we have seen—
As if we guessed what hers have been,
  Or what they are, or would be.

Meanwhile, we do no harm; for they
  That with a god have striven,
Not hearing much of what we say,
  Take what the god has given;
Though like waves breaking it may be,
Or like a changed familiar tree,
Or like a stairway to the sea,
  Where down the blind are driven.

FIRELIGHT

Ten years together without yet a cloud,
They seek each other's eyes at intervals
Of gratefulness to firelight and four walls
For love's obliteration of the crowd.
Serenely and perennially endowed
And bowered as few may be, their joy recalls
No snake, no sword; and over them there falls
The blessing of what neither says aloud.

Wiser for silence, they were not so glad
Were she to read the graven tale of lines
On the wan face of one somewhere alone;
Nor were they more content could he have had
Her thoughts a moment since of one who shines
Apart, and would be hers if he had known.

CAPUT MORTUUM

Not even if with a wizard force I might
Have summoned whomsoever I would name,
Should anyone else have come than he who came,
Uncalled, to share with me my fire that night;
For though I should have said that all was right,
Or right enough, nothing had been the same
As when I found him there before the flame,
Always a welcome and a useful sight.

Unfailing and exuberant all the time,
Having no gold, he paid with golden rhyme
Of older coinage than his old defeat—
A debt that like himself was obsolete
In Art's long hazard, where no man may choose
Whether he play to win or toil to lose.

THE NEW TENANTS

The day was here when it was his to know
How fared the barriers he had built between
His triumph and his enemies unseen,
For them to undermine and overthrow;
And it was his no longer to forego
The sight of them, insidious and serene,
Where they were delving always, and had been
Left always to be vicious and to grow.

And there were the new tenants who had come,
By doors that were left open unawares,
Into his house, and were so much at home
There now that he would hardly have to guess,
By the slow guile of their vindictiveness,
What ultimate insolence would soon be theirs.

MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night
Over the hill between the town below
And the forsaken upland hermitage
That held as much as he should ever know
On earth again of home, paused warily.
The road was his with not a native near;
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon
Again, and we may not have many more;
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,
And you and I have said it here before.
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,
He stood there in the middle of the road
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.
Below him, in the town among the trees,
Where friends of other days had honored him,
A phantom salutation of the dead
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down slowly at his feet
With trembling care, knowing that most things break;
And only when assured that on firm earth
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men
Assuredly did not, he paced away,
And with his hand extended paused again:

" Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come
To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home! "
Convivially returning with himself,
Again he raised the jug up to the light;
And with an acquiescent quaver said:
" Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

" Only a very little, Mr. Flood—
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."
So, for the time, apparently it did,
And Eben evidently thought so too;
For soon amid the silver loneliness
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,
Secure, with only two moons listening,
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

" For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,
The last word wavered; and the song being done,
He raised again the jug regretfully,
And shook his head, and was again alone.

There was not much that was ahead of him,
And there was nothing in the town below—
Where strangers would have shut the many doors
That many friends had opened long ago.

Isaac Rosenberg

IF YOU ARE FIRE

If you are fire and I am fire,
Who blows the flame apart
So that desire eludes desire
Around one central heart?

A single root and separate bough,
And what blind hands between
That make our longing's mutual glow
As if it had not been?

HEART'S FIRST WORD

And all her soft dark hair,
Breathed for him like a prayer.
And her white lost face
Was prisoned to some far place.
Love was not denied—
Love's ends would hide.
And flower and fruit and tree
Were under its sea.
Yea! its abundance knelt
Where the nerves felt
The springs of feeling flow,
And made pain grow.
There seemed no root or sky,
But a pent infinity
Where apparitions dim
Sculptured each whim
In flame and wandering mist
Of kisses to be kissed.

POEM

Caught still as Absalom,
Surely the air hangs
From the swayless cloud-boughs,
Like hair of Absalom
Caught and hanging still.

From the imagined weight
Of spaces in a sky
Of mute chagrin, my thoughts
Hang like branch-clung hair
To trunks of silence swung,
With the choked soul weighing down
Into thick emptiness.
Christ! end this hanging death,
For endlessness hangs therefrom.

Invisibly branches break
From invisible trees—
The cloud-woods where we rush,
Our eyes holding so much
Which we must ride dim ages round
Ere the hands (we dream) can touch:
We ride, we ride, before the morning,
The secret roots of the sun to tread,
And suddenly
We are lifted of all we know
And hang from implacable boughs.

UNNAMED

I did not pluck at all,
And I am sorry now.
The garden is not barred,
But the boughs are heavy with snow;
The flake-blossoms thickly fall,
And the hid roots sigh, " How long will our flowers be marred? "

Strange as a bird were dumb,
Strange as a hueless leaf,
As one deaf hungers to hear
Or gazes without belief,
The fruit yearned, " Fingers, come! "
O shut hands, be empty another year!

Carl Sandburg

CHICAGO

Hog-butcher for the world,
Tool-maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight-handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked, and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people.
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of youth; half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog-butcher, Tool-maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads, and Freight-handler to the Nation.

THE HARBOR

Passing through huddled and ugly walls,
By doorways where women
Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,
Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,
Out from the huddled and ugly walls,
I came sudden, at the city's edge,
On a blue burst of lake—
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls,
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open.

SKETCH

The shadows of the ships
Rock on the crest
In the low blue lustre
Of the tardy and the soft inrolling tide.

A long brown bar at the dip of the sky
Puts an arm of sand in the span of salt.

The lucid and endless wrinkles
Draw in, lapse and withdraw.
Wavelets crumble and white spent bubbles
Wash on the floor of the beach.

Rocking on the crest
In the low blue lustre
Are the shadows of the ships.

LOST

Desolate and lone
All night long on the lake
Where fog trails and mist creeps,
The whistle of a boat
Calls and cries unendingly,
Like some lost child
In tears and trouble
Hunting the harbor's breast
And the harbor's eyes.

JAN KUBELIK

Your bow swept over a string, and a long low note quivered to the air.
(A mother of Bohemia sobs over a new child, perfect, learning to suck milk.)

Your bow ran fast over all the high strings fluttering and wild.
(All the girls in Bohemia are laughing on a Sunday afternoon in the hills with their lovers.)

AT A WINDOW

Give me hunger,
O you gods that sit and give
The world its orders.

Give me hunger, pain and want;
Shut me out with shame and failure
From your doors of gold and fame,
Give me your shabbiest, weariest hunger.

But leave me a little love,
A voice to speak to me in the day end,
A hand to touch me in the dark room
Breaking the long loneliness.
In the dusk of day-shapes
Blurring the sunset,
One little wandering, western star
Thrust out from the changing shores of shadow.
Let me go to the window,
Watch there the day-shapes of dusk,
And wait and know the coming
Of a little love.

THE POOR

Among the mountains I wandered and saw blue haze and red crag and was amazed;
On the beach where the long push under the endless tide maneuvers, I stood silent;
Under the stars on the prairie watching the Dipper slant over the horizon's grass, I was full of thoughts.
Great men, pageants of war and labor, soldiers and workers, mothers lifting their children—these all I touched, and felt the solemn thrill of them.
And then one day I got a true look at the Poor, millions of the Poor, patient and toiling; more patient than crags, tides, and stars; innumerable, patient as the darkness of night—and all broken, humble ruins of nations.

THE ROAD AND THE END

I shall foot it
Down the roadway in the dusk,
Where shapes of hunger wander
And the fugitives of pain go by.

I shall foot it
In the silence of the morning,
See the night slur into dawn,
Hear the slow great winds arise
Where tall trees flank the way
And shoulder toward the sky.

The broken boulders by the road
Shall not commemorate my ruin.
Regret shall be the gravel under foot.
I shall watch for
Slim birds swift of wing
That go where wind and ranks of thunder
Drive the wild processionals of rain.

The dust of the traveled road
Shall touch my hands and face.

KILLERS

I am singing to you
Soft as a man with a dead child speaks;
Hard as a man in handcuffs,
Held where he can not move;

Under the sun
Are sixteen million men,
Chosen for shining teeth,
Sharp eyes, hard legs,
And a running of young warm blood in their wrists.

And a red juice runs on the green grass;
And a red juice soaks the dark soil.
And the sixteen million are killing . . . and killing and killing.
I never forget them day or night:
They beat on my head for memory of them;
They pound on my heart and I cry back to them,
To their homes and women, dreams and games.
I wake in the night and smell the trenches,
And hear the low stir of sleepers in lines—
Sixteen million sleepers and pickets in the dark:
Some of them long sleepers for always,
Some of them tumbling to sleep tomorrow for always,
Fixed in the drag of the world's heartbreak,
Eating and drinking, toiling . . . on a long job of killing.

Sixteen million men.

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

HANDFULS

Blossoms of babies
Blinking their stories
Come soft
On the dusk and the babble;
Little red gamblers,
Handfuls that slept in the dust.

Summers of rain,
Winters of drift,
Tell off the years;
And they go back
Who came soft—
Back to the sod,
To silence and dust;
Gray gamblers,
Handfuls again.

UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

Under the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,
Death, the gray mocker,
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.

Under the summer roses,
When the flagrant crimson
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories,
And asks you
Beautiful unanswerable questions.

CHOOSE

The single clenched fist lifted and ready,
Or the open asking hand held out and waiting.
Choose:
For we meet by one or the other.

KIN

Brother, I am fire
Surging under the ocean floor.
I shall never meet you, brother—
Not for years, anyhow;
Maybe thousands of years, brother.
Then I will warm you,
Hold you close, wrap you in circles,
Use you and change you—
Maybe thousands of years, brother.

PLACES

Roses and gold
For you today,
And the flash of flying flags.

I will have
Ashes,
Dust in my hair,
Crushes of hoofs.

Your name
Fills the mouth
Of rich man and poor.
Women bring
Armfuls of flowers
And throw on you.

I go hungry
Down in dreams
And loneliness,
Across the rain
To slashed hills
Where men wait and hope for me.

JOY

Let a joy keep you.
Reach out your hands
And take it when it runs by,
As the Apache dancer
Clutches his woman.
I have seen them
Live long and laugh loud,
Sent on singing, singing,
Smashed to the heart
Under the ribs
With a terrible love.
Joy always,
Joy everywhere—
Let joy kill you!
Keep away from the little deaths.

THE GREAT HUNT

I can not tell you now;
When the wind's drive and whirl
Blow me along no longer,
And the wind's a whisper at last—
Maybe I'll tell you then—
some other time.

When the rose's flash to the sunset
Reels to the wrack and the twist,
And the rose is a red bygone,
When the face I love is going
And the gate to the end shall clang,
And it's no use to beckon or say, "So long"—
Maybe I'll tell you then—
some other time.

I never knew any more beautiful than you:
I have hunted you under my thoughts,

I have broken down under the wind
And into the roses looking for you.
I shall never find any
greater than you.

OUR PRAYER OF THANKS

For the gladness here where the sun is shining at evening on the weeds at the river,
Our prayer of thanks.

For the laughter of children who tumble barefooted and bareheaded in the summer grass,
Our prayer of thanks.

For the sunset and the stars, the women and their white arms that hold us,
Our prayer of thanks.

God,
If you are deaf and blind, if this is all lost to you,
God, if the dead in their coffins amid the silver handles on the edge of town, or the reckless dead of war days thrown unknown in pits, if these dead are forever deaf and blind and lost,
Our prayer of thanks.

God,
The game is all your way, the secrets and the signals and the system; and so, for the break of the game and the first play and the last,
Our prayer of thanks.

HELGA

The wishes on this child's mouth
Came like snow on marsh cranberries;
The tamarack kept something for her;
The wind is ready to help her shoes.

The North has loved her; she will be
A grandmother feeding geese on frosty
Mornings; she will understand
Early snow on the cranberries
Better and better then.

GONE

Everybody loved Chick Lorimer in our town.
Far off
Everybody loved her.
So we all love a wild girl keeping a hold
On a dream she wants.
Nobody knows now where Chick Lorimer went.
Nobody knows why she packed her trunk . . . a few old things
And is gone,
Gone with her little chin
Thrust ahead of her,
And her soft hair blowing careless
From under a wide hat—
Dancer, singer, a laughing passionate lover.

Were there ten men or a hundred hunting Chick?
Were there five men or fifty with aching hearts?
Everybody loved Chick Lorimer.
Nobody knows where she's gone.

FIRE-LOGS

Nancy Hanks dreams by the fire;
Dreams, and the logs sputter,
And the yellow tongues climb.
Red lines lick their way in flickers.

Oh, sputter, logs.
Oh, dream, Nancy.
Time now for a beautiful child.
Time now for a tall man to come.

REPETITIONS

They are crying salt tears
Over the beautiful beloved body
Of Inez Milholland,
Because they are glad she lived,
Because she loved open-armed,
Throwing love for a cheap thing
Belonging to everybody—
Cheap as sunlight,
And morning air.

CALLS

Because I have called to you
As the flame flamingo calls,
Or the want of a spotted hawk
Is called—
Because in the dusk
The warblers shoot the running
Waters of short songs to the
Homecoming warblers—
Because
The cry here is wing to wing
And song to song—

I am waiting,
Waiting with the flame flamingo,
The spotted hawk, the running water
Warbler—
Waiting for you.

EVENING WATERFALL

What was the name you called me?—
And why did you go so soon?

The crows lift their caw on the wind,
And the wind changed and was lonely.

The warblers cry their sleepy-songs
Across the valley gloaming,
Across the cattle-horns of early stars.

Feathers and people in the crotch of a treetop
Throw an evening waterfall of sleepy-songs.

What was the name you called me?—
And why did you go so soon?

LOSERS

If I should pass the tomb of Jonah
I would stop there and sit for awhile;
Because I was swallowed one time deep in the dark
And came out alive after all.

If I pass the burial spot of Nero
I shall say to the wind, " Well, well! "—
I who have fiddled in a world on fire,
I who have done so many stunts not worth doing.

I am looking for the grave of Sinbad too.
I want to shake his ghost-hand and say,
" Neither of us died very early, did we? "

And the last sleeping-place of Nebuchadnezzar—
When I arrive there I shall tell the wind:
" You ate grass; I have eaten crow—
Who is better off now or next year? "

Jack Cade, John Brown, Jesse James,
There too I could sit down and stop for awhile.
I think I could tell their headstones:
" God, let me remember all good losers."

I could ask people to throw ashes on their heads
In the name of that sergeant at Belleau Woods,
Walking into the drumfires, calling his men,
" Come on, you ——! Do you want to live forever? "

OLD TIMERS

I am an ancient reluctant conscript.

On the soup wagons of Xerxes I was a cleaner of pans.

On the march of Miltiades' phalanx I had a haft and head;
I had a bristling gleaming spear-handle.

Red-headed Caesar picked me for a teamster.
He said, " Go to work, you Tuscan bastard!
Rome calls for a man who can drive horses."

The units of conquest led by Charles the Twelfth,
The whirling whimsical Napoleonic columns:
They saw me one of the horseshoers.

I trimmed the feet of a white horse Bonaparte swept the night
stars with.

Lincoln said, " Get into the game; your nation takes you."
And I drove a wagon and team, and I had my arm shot off
At Spottsylvania Court House.

I am an ancient reluctant conscript.

NIGHT STUFF

Listen awhile—the moon is a lovely woman, a lonely woman, lost in a silver dress, lost in a circus-rider's silver dress.

Listen awhile—the lake by night is a lonely woman, a lovely woman, circled with birches and pines mixing their green and white among stars shattered in spray clear nights.

I know the moon and the lake have twisted the roots under my heart—the same as a lonely woman, a lovely woman, in a silver dress, in a circus-rider's silver dress.

FALLTIME

Gold of a ripe oat straw, gold of a southwest moon,
Canada-thistle blue and flimmering larkspur blue,
Tomatoes shining in the October sun with red hearts,
Shining five and six in a row on a wooden fence,
Why do you keep wishes on your faces all day long,
Wishes like women with half-forgotten lovers going to new cities?
What is there for you in the birds, the birds, the birds, crying down on the north wind in September—acres of birds spotting the air going south?

Is there something finished? And some new beginning on the way?

AUTUMN MOVEMENT

I cried over beautiful things, knowing no beautiful thing lasts.

The field of cornflower yellow is a scarf at the neck of the copper sunburned woman, the mother of the year, the taker of seeds.

The northwest wind comes and the yellow is torn full of holes, new beautiful things come in the first spit of snow on the northwest wind, and the old things go, not one lasts.

PRAIRIE

(*Finale—a fragment.*)

O prairie mother, I am one of your boys.
I have loved the prairie as a man with a heart shot full of pain over love.
Here I know I will hanker after nothing so much as one more sunrise, or a sky moon of fire doubled to a river moon of water.

I speak of new cities and new people.
I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes.
I tell you yesterday is a wind gone down,
A sun dropped in the west.
I tell you there is nothing in the world
Only an ocean of tomorrows,
A sky of tomorrows.

I am a brother of the cornhuskers who say at sundown:
Tomorrow is a day.

PRAYERS OF STEEL

Lay me on an anvil, O God!
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls;
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God!
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work:
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg,
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

BRINGERS

Cover me over
In dusk and dust and dreams.

Cover me over
And leave me alone.

Cover me over,
You tireless, great.

Hear me and cover me,
Bringers of dusk and dust and dreams.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May—did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND

"The past is a bucket of ashes."

I

The woman named Tomorrow
Sits with a hairpin in her teeth
And takes her time,
And does her hair the way she wants it,
And fastens at last the last braid and coil,
And puts the hairpin where it belongs,
And turns and drawls: "Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead."

II

The doors were cedar
And the panels strips of gold;
And the girls were golden girls,
And the panels read and the girls chanted:
"We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation;
nothing like us ever was."
The doors are twisted on broken hinges.
Sheets of rain swish through on the wind
where the golden girls ran and the panels read:
"We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation;
nothing like us ever was."

III

It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got
a nation together,
And paid singers to sing and women
to warble: "We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation;
nothing like us ever was."

And while the singers sang,
And the strong men listened
And paid the singers well
And felt good about it all,
there were rats and lizards who listened . . .
and the only listeners left now . . .
are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.

And there are black crows
Crying, "Caw, caw,"
Bringing mud and sticks,
Building a nest
Over the words carved
On the doors where the panels were cedar
And the strips on the panels were gold,
And the golden girls came singing:
"We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was."

The only singers now are crows crying, "Caw, caw;"
And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.
And the only listeners now are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.

IV

The feet of the rats
Scribble on the door-sills;
The hieroglyphs of the rat footprints
Chatter the pedigrees of the rats,
And babble of the blood

And gabble of the breed
Of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers
Of the rats.

And the wind shifts,
And the dust on the door-sill shifts,
And even the writing of the rat footprints
Tells us nothing, nothing at all
About the greatest city, the greatest nation,
Where the strong men listened
And the women warbled: "Nothing like us ever was"

Lew Sarett

THE BLUE DUCK

A Chippewa Medicine Dance

To be read with a vigorous lilt emphasizing the drum-beats

Hi'! Hi! Hi'! Hi!
Hi'! Hi! Hi'! Hi!
Hee'-ya! Hoi-ya!
Hee'-ya! Hoi-ya!
Keetch'-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
The hunter-moon is chipping at his flints,
At his dripping bloody flints,
He is rising for the hunt,
And his face is red with blood
From the spears of many spruces,
And his blood is on the leaves that flutter down.
The Winter-maker, Beé-bo-an',
Is walking in the sky,
And his windy blanket rustles in the trees.
He is blazing out the trail
Through the fields of nodding rice
For the swift and whistling wings
Of his She-shé-be,
For the worn and weary wings
Of many duck—
Ho! plenty duck! plenty duck!
Ho! plenty, plenty duck!

Hi'! Hi! *More slowly and quietly, verging on a chant*
Hi'! Hi!
Hoy-eeeeé! Ya!
Hoy-eeeeé! Ya!
Keetch'-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
The seasons have been barren.
In the moon of flowers and grass,
From the blighted berry patches
And the maple-sugar bush,
The hands of all my children
Came home empty, came home clean.
And the big rain of Nee-bín, the summer-maker,
Washed away the many little pa'tridge.
And even Ad-ik-kum'-aig, sweetest white-fish,
Went sulking all the summer moon,
Hiding in the deepest waters,
Silver belly in the mud;
And he would not walk into my nets. Ugh!
Thus the skin-sacks and the mo'kuks
Hang within my teepee empty.

Soon the winter moon will come, *Slower—chant rising to a wail*
Slipping through the silent timber,
Walking on the silent snow,
Stalking on the frozen lake.
Lean-bellied,
Squatting with his rump upon the ice,
The phantom wolf will fling his wailings to the stars.
Then Wéen-di-go, the Devil-spirit,
Whining through the lodge-poles,
Will clutch and shake my teepee,
Calling, *Melancholy wailing from this point on—higher and higher in pitch*
Calling,
Calling as he sifts into my lodge;
And ghostly little shadow-arms
Will float out through the smoke-hole, in the night—
Leaping, tossing shadow-arms,
Little arms of little children,

Hungry hands of shadow-arms,
Clutching,
Clutching,
Clutching at the breast that is not there . . .
Shadow-arms and shadow-breasts,
Twisting,
Twisting,
Twisting in and twisting out,
On the ghastly clouds of smoke . . .
Riding on the whistling wind . . .
Riding on the whistling wind . . .
Riding on the whistling wind . . .
Starward.
Blow, blow, blow, Kee-wáy-din, North-wind,
Warm and gentle on my children,
Cold and swift upon the wild She-shé-be!
Ha-a-ah-eeeee-ooooooooo . . . Plenty duck . . .
Ha-a-a-ah-eeeeeee-ooooooooooo . . . Plenty duck . . .

Faster, with a lilt.
Dancing rhythm

Hi'! Hi! Hi'! Hi!
Hi'! Hi! Hi'! Hi!
Keetch'-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
Blow on Ah-bi-tee'-bi many wings:
Wings of teal and wings of mallard,
Wings of green and blue.
My little lake lies waiting,
Singing for her blust'ry lover;
Dancing on the golden-stranded shore
With many little moccasins,
Pretty little moccasins,
Beaded with her silver sands,
And with her golden pebbles.
And upon her gentle bosom
Lies Mah-no'-min, sweetest wild-rice,
Green and yellow,
Rustling blade and rippling blossom.
Hi-yee! Hi-yee! Blow on Ah-bi-tee'-bi plenty duck!
Ho! Plenty duck! Ho! Plenty duck!

Hi'! Hi! Hi'! Hi! Hi'! Hi! Hi'! Hi! *Faster and louder—with abandon*
Hee'-ya! Hoi'-ya! Hee'-ya! Hoi'-ya!
Keetch'-ie Má-ni-dó, Má-ni-dó,
I place this pretty duck upon your hand;
Upon its sunny palm and in its windy fingers.
Hi-yee! Blue and beautiful is he, beautifully blue;
Carved from sleeping cedar
When the stars like silver fishes
Were a-quiver in the rivers of the sky;
Carved from dripping cedar
When the Koo'-koo-koo' dashed hooting
At the furtive feet that rustled in the leaves,
And seasoned many moons, many moons!—
Ho! seasoned many, many, many sleeps!
Hi-yee! Blue and beautiful is he, beautifully blue.
Though his throat is choked with timber,
And he honks not on his pole,
And his wings are weak with hunger,
Yet his heart is plenty good!
Hi-yee! Hi-yee! His heart is plenty good, plenty good!
Hi-yee! Hi-yee! Hi-yee! His heart is good!

My heart like his is good!

Ugh! My tongue is straight!

Ho!

Ho!

BEAT AGAINST ME NO LONGER

Ai-yee! My yellow-bird-woman,
My ne-ne-moosh, ai-yee! my loved one,
Be not afraid of my eyes!
Beat against me no longer!
Come! Come with a yielding of limbs!
Ai-yee! Woman, woman,
Trembling there in the teepee
Like the doe in the season of mating,
Why foolishly fearest thou me?

Cast the strange doubts from thy bosom—
Be not afraid of my eyes!
Be not as the flat-breasted squaw-sich
Who feels the first womanly yearnings
And hides, by the law of our people,
Alone three sleeps in the forest;
Be not as that brooding young maiden
Who wanders forlorn in the cedars,
And slumbers with troubled dreams,
To awaken suddenly, fearing
The hot throbbing blood in her bosom,
The strange eager life in her limbs.
Ai-yee! Foolish one, woman,
Cast the strange fears from thy heart—
Wash the red shame from thy face.
Be not afraid of my glances—
Be as the young silver birch
In the moon-of-the-green-growing-flowers,
Who sings with the thrill of the sap
As it leaps to the south-wind's caresses;
Who yields her rain-swollen buds
To the kiss of the sun with glad dancing.
Be as the cool tranquil moon
Who flings off her silver-blue blanket
To bare her white breast to the pine;
Who walks through the many-eyed night
In her gleaming white nudeness
With proud eyes that will not look down.
Be as the sun in her glory,
Who dances across the blue day
And flings her red soul, fierce-burning,
Into the arms of the twilight.
Ai-yee! Foolish one, woman,
Be as the sun and the moon!
Cast the strange doubts from thy bosom—
Wash the red shame from thy face!
Thou art a woman, a woman—
Beat against me no longer!
Be not afraid of my eyes!

Siegfried Sassoon

THE KISS

To these I turn, in these I trust;
Brother Lead and Sister Steel.
To his blind power I make appeal;
I guard her beauty clean from rust.

He spins and burns and loves the air,
And splits a skull to win my praise;
But up the nobly marching days
She glitters naked, cold and fair.

Sweet sister, grant your soldier this;
That in good fury he may feel
The body where he sets his heel
Quail from your downward darting kiss.

A MYSTIC AS SOLDIER

I lived my days apart,
Dreaming fair songs for God,
By the glory in my heart
Covered and crowned and shod.

Now God is in the strife,
And I must seek Him there,
Where death outnumbers life,
And fury smites the air.

I walk the secret way
With anger in my brain.
O music through my clay,
When will you sound again?

AUTUMN

October's bellowing anger breaks and cleaves
The bronzed battalions of the stricken wood
In whose lament I hear a voice that grieves
For battle's fruitless harvest, and the feud
Of outraged men. Their lives are like the leaves
Scattered in flocks of ruin, tossed and blown
Along the westering furnace flaring red.
O martyred youth and manhood overthrown,
The burden of your wrongs is on my head.

DOES IT MATTER?

Does it matter—losing your legs? . . .
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter—losing your sight? . . .
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter—those dreams from the pit? . . .
You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know that you've fought for your country,
And no one will worry a bit.

SICK LEAVE

When I'm asleep, dreaming and lulled and warm,
They come, the homeless ones, the noiseless dead.
While the dim charging breakers of the storm
Bellow and drone and rumble overhead,
Out of the gloom they gather about my bed.
  They whisper to my heart; their thoughts are mine.
  " Why are you here with all your watches ended?
  From Ypres to Frise we sought you in the Line."
In bitter safety I awake, unfriended;
And while the dawn begins with slashing rain
I think of the Battalion in the mud.
" When are you going out to them again?
Are they not still your brothers through our blood? "

EVERYONE SANG

Armistice Day

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on—on—and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away . . . Oh, but everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless—the singing will never be done.

Alan Seeger

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade
When spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air.
I have a rendezvous with Death
When spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath.
It may be I shall pass him, still
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill
When spring comes 'round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep.
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear. . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When spring trips north again this year.
And I to my pledged word am true—
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert

THE OLD WOMAN

A Morality Play in Two Parts

I

Doctor There is an old woman
Who ought to die—

Deacon And nobody knows
But what she's dead—

Doctor The air will be cleaner
When she's gone—

Deacon But we dare not bury her
Till she's dead.

Landlady Come, young doctor
From the first floor front,
Come, dusty deacon
From the fourth floor back.
You take her heels
And I'll take her head—

Doctor and Deacon We'll carry her
And bury her—
If she's dead!

House They roll her up
In her old red quilt,
They carry her down
At a horizontal tilt.
She doesn't say, "Yes!"
And she doesn't say, "No!"
She doesn't say, "Gentlemen,
Where do we go?"

Doctor Out in the lot
Where the ash-cans die,

There, old woman,
There shall you lie!

Deacon Let's hurry away,
And never look behind
To see if her eyes
Are dead and blind,
To see if the quilt
Lies over her face.
Perhaps she'll groan,
Or move in her place—

House The room is empty
Where the old woman lay,
And I no longer
Smell like a tomb—

Landlady Doctor, deacon,
Can you say
Who'll pay the rent
For the old woman's room?

II

House The room is empty
Down the hall;
There are mice in the closet,
Ghosts in the wall.
A pretty little lady
Comes to see—

Woman Oh, what a dark room!
Not for me!

Landlady The room is large
And the rent is low;
There's a deacon above,
And a doctor below.

Deacon When the little mice squeak
I will pray—

Doctor I'll psycho-analyze
The ghosts away.

Landlady The bed is large
And the mattress deep;
Wrapped in a featherbed
You shall sleep.

Woman But here's the door
Without a key—
An unlocked room
Won't do for me!

Doctor Here's a bolt—

Deacon And here's a bar—

Landlady You'll sleep safely
Where you are!

Woman Good-night, gentlemen,
It's growing late.
Good-night, landlady,
Pray don't wait!
I'm going to bed—
I'll bolt the door
And sleep more soundly
Than ever before!

Deacon Good-night, madam,
I'll steal sway—

Doctor Glad a pretty lady
Has come to stay!

House She lights a candle—
What do I see?
That cloak looks like
A quilt to me!
She climbs into bed
Where long she's lain;

She's come back home—
She won't leave again.
She's found once more
Her rightful place—
Same old lady
With a pretty new face.
Let the deacon pray
And the doctor talk—
The mice will squeak
And the ghosts will walk.
There's a crafty smile
On the landlady's face—
The old woman's gone
And she's filled her place!

Landlady It's nothing to me
If the old woman's dead—
I've somebody sleeping
In every bed!

A JAPANESE VASE WROUGHT IN METALS

Five harsh black birds shining in bronze come crying
Into a silver sky.
Piercing and jubilant is the shape of their flying;
Their beaks are pointed with delight,
Curved sharply with desire.
The passionate direction of their flight,
Clear and high,
Stretches their bodies taut like humming wire.
The cold wind blows into angry patterns the jet-bright
Feathers of their wings;
Their claws curl loosely, safely, about nothingness—
They clasp no things.
Direction and desire they possess,
By which in sharp unswerving flight they hold
Across an iron sea to the golden beach
Whereon lies carrion, their feast: a shore of gold
That birds wrought on a vase can never reach.

LORENZO'S BAS RELIEF FOR A FLORENTINE CHEST

Lust is the oldest lion of them all,
And he shall have first place;
With a malignant growl satirical
To curve in foliations prodigal
Round and around his face,
Extending till the echoes interlace
With Pride and Prudence, two cranes gaunt and tall.

Four lesser lions crouch and malign the cranes.
Cursing and gossiping, they shake their manes,
While from their long tongues leak
Drops of thin venom as they speak.
The cranes, unmoved, peck grapes and grains
From a huge cornucopia, which rains
A plenteous meal from its antique
Interior—a note quite curiously Greek.

And nine long serpents twist
And twine, twist and twine—
A riotously beautiful design
Whose elements consist
Of eloquent spirals, fair and fine,
Embracing cranes and lions, who exist
Seemingly free, yet tangled in that living vine.

And in this chest shall be
Two cubic metres of space—
Enough to hold all memory
Of you and me. . . .
And this shall be the place
Where silence shall embrace
Our bodies, and obliterate the trace
Our souls made on the purity
Of night. . . .
Now lock the chest, for we
Are dead, and lose the key!

INTERIOR

Words curl like fragrant smoke-wreaths in the room
From the majestic beard of an old man
Who props his shabby feet upon the stove
Recalling ancient sorrows. In the gloom
Beyond the lamp a woman thinks of love,
Her round arms wrapped in her apron, her dark head
Drooping. She has a bitter thing to learn.
His words drift over her . . . uncomforted
Her pain whirls up and twists like a scarlet thread
Among his words. He rises, shoves his chair
Back from the stove, pauses beside her there;
Shuffles irresolutely off to bed.

MAURA

I

Maura dreams unwakened:
The warm winds touch the bands
That hold her hair;
The call of a silver horn floats by;
A lover tosses flowers into her hands.

Maura dreams unwakened:
She joins the maidens in their dance,
Her limbs follow slow rhythms;
A lover leads her into the shade—
She moves as in a trance.

II

What dim confusion
Troubles her dream?
What passionate caress
Disturbs her spirit's rapt seclusion?

Earth draws her close—how warm
Is lover-earth! Like a sleeping bird
She gives herself, then suddenly
She is a leaf whirled in the storm.

Somewhere in a quiet room her soul, unstirred,
Dead . . . or sleeping,
Through the blind tumult hears afar
The note of a horn, like a silver thread.
She has given her soul to an echo's keeping.

III

Who knows the mountain where the hunter rides
Winding his horn?
Maura, who heard it in her dream,
Wakens forlorn,
Too late to catch the tenuous thread
Of silver sound
Which in the intricate, troubled fugue of earth
Is drowned.

IV

Maura cannot follow over the hill;
Her youth is land-locked as a hidden pool
Where thirsty love drinks deep—
A shining pool where lingers
The color of an unseen golden sky,
A pool where echoes fall asleep.

But restless fingers
Trouble the waters cool,
Snatch at reflected beauty, and destroy
The mirrored dream. . . . The pool is never still
And broken echoes die.

V

The silver call has gone; but there is left to her
The gentleness of earth,
The simple mysteries of sleep and death,
Of love and birth.

There are faces hungry for smiles, and starving fingers
Reaching for dreams.

And like a memory are the wind-swept chords of night,
And the wide melody of evening sky
Where gleams
A color like the echo of a horn.
There is a far hill where winds die,
And over the hill lies music yet unborn.

VI

Maura lies dead at last;
The body she gave to child and lover
Now feeds flower and tree.

Earth's arms are wide to her . . . what breast
Offers such gentle sleeping?
Her limbs lie peacefully.

From the dark West
Comes down a note like the echoing cry
Of one who rides through the dusk alone
After the hunt sweeps by.

It fades—the night wind is forlorn—
Music is still:
But Maura has followed the silver horn
Over the distant hill,
Over the hill where all winds die.

Clara Shanafelt

TO THEE

White foam flower, red flame flower
On my tree of delight.
Lean from the shadow
Like singing in sorrow—
Pale flower of thy smile, flame flower of thy touch,
In my night.

CAPRICE

Who will be naming the wind
That lifts me and leaves me;
Swelleth my budding flame,
Foully bereaves me?
From the land whose forgotten name
Man shall not find,
Blowest thou, wind?

A VIVID GIRL

Her face is fair and smooth and fine,
Childlike, with secret laughter lit;
Drooping in pity, bright with wit,
A flower, a flame—God fashioned it.
Who sees her tastes the sacred wine.

INVOCATION

O glass-blower of time,
  Hast blown all shapes at thy fire?
Canst thou no lovelier bell,
  No clearer bubble, clear as delight, inflate me—
Worthy to hold such wine
  As was never yet trod from the grape,
Since the stars shed their light, since the moon
  Troubled the night with her beauty?

PASTEL

She has a clear wind-sheltered loveliness,
Like pale streams winding far, and hills withdrawn
From the bright reaches of the noon. Dawn
Is her lifting fancy, but her heart
Is orchard boughs and dusk and quietness.

A GALLANT WOMAN

She burst fierce wine
From the tough skin of pain,
Like wind that wrings from rigid skies
A scant and bitter gleam,
Long after the autumnal dusk
Has folded all the valleys in.

SCHERZO

The elder's bridal in July,
Bright as a cloud!
A ripe blonde girl,
Billowing to the ground in foamy petticoats,
With breasts full-blown
Swelling her bodice.

But later
When the small black-ruddy berries
Tempt the birds to strip the stems,
And the leaves begin to yellow and fall off
While late summer's still in its green,
Then you look lank and used up,
Elder;
Your big bones stick out,
You're the kind of woman
Wears bleak at forty.

I'll take my constant pleasure
In a willow-tree that ripples silver
All the summer.
And when the winter comes in greasy rags,
Like a half-naked beggar,
Lets out the plaited splendor
Of her bright and glancing hair.

Frances Shaw

WHO LOVES THE RAIN

Who loves the rain
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes,
Him will I follow through the storm;
And at his hearth-fire keep me warm;
Nor hell nor heaven shall that soul surprise,
Who loves the rain,
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes.

THE HARP OF THE WIND

My house stands high—
Where the harp of the wind
Plays all day,
Plays all night;
And the city light
Is far away.

Where hangs the harp that the winds play?—
High in the air—
Over the sea?

The long straight streets of the far-away town,
Where the lines of light go sweeping down,
Are the strings of its minstrelsy.

And the harp of the wind
Gives to the wind
A song of the city's tears;
Thin and faint, the cry of a child,
Plaint of the soul unreconciled,
A song of the passing years.

THE RAGPICKER

The Ragpicker sits and sorts her rags:
  Silk and homespun and threads of gold
She plucks to pieces and marks with tags;
  And her eyes are ice and her fingers cold.

The Ragpicker sits in the back of my brain;
  Keenly she looks me through and through.
One flaming shred I have hidden away—
  She shall not have my love for you.

COLOGNE CATHEDRAL

The little white prayers
  Of Elspeth Fry
Float up the arches
  Into the sky.

A little black bird
  On the belfry high
Pecks at them
  As they go by.

STAR THOUGHT

I shall see a star tonight
From a distant mountain height;
From a city you will see
The same star that shines on me.

'Tis not of the firmament
On a solar journey bent;
Fixed it is through time and weather—
'Tis a thought we hold together.

THE CHILD'S QUEST

My mother twines me roses wet with dew;
Oft have I sought the garden through and through;
I cannot find the tree whereon
My mother's roses grew.
Seek not, O child, the tree whereon
Thy mother's roses grew.

My mother tells me tales of noble deeds;
Oft have I sought her book when no one heeds;
I cannot find the page, alas,
From which my mother reads.
Seek not, O child, to find the page
From which thy mother reads.

My mother croons me songs all soft and low,
Through the white night where little breezes blow;
Yet never when the morning dawns
My mother's songs I know.
Seek not, O child, at dawn of day
Thy mother's songs to know.

LITTLE PAGAN RAIN SONG

In the dark and peace of my final bed,
The wet grass waving above my head,
At rest from love, at rest from pain,
I lie and listen to the rain.

Falling, softly falling,
Song of my soul that is free;
Song of my soul that has not forgot
The sleeping body of me.

When quiet and calm and straight I lie,
High in the air my soul rides by.
Shall I await thee, soul, in vain?
Hark to the answer in the rain.

Falling, softly falling,
Song of my soul that is free;
Song of my soul that will not forget
The sleeping body of me.

THE LAST GUEST

Why have you lit so bright a fire
For chatterers to sit about,
While wistful at the door,
And lonely at the door,
One waits without?

Why have you spread so rich a feast
For careless and insatiate,
While eager at the door,
And wanly at the door,
Waits one most delicate?

When the night deepens, and the guests
Have passed to some new clamorous goal,
Let in the quiet one,
Let in the longing one;
Close to the last red embers draw
Your welcome soul.

William H. Simpson

IN ARIZONA

HOPI GHOSTS

Ghosts of the early earth!
The sly coyote knows you,
And the timid deer.
I asked the eagle, circling skyward,
And saw your twin shadows.
The fox looks everywhere
And calls you brother.

Was it your whisper,
Your mocking whisper,
Among the twisted cedars?

Or only the tired winds,
Cuddling on the cool breasts of evening?

BURDENS

Burden of water jars,
Borne up steep trails;
Burden of babies,
Asleep in thonged cradles.

And a heaped-up load of loving,
Carried lightly,
Over all the trails
To the end of them.

BAREBACK

The winds ride bareback,
Swinging lassos.

Their reins hang loose,
Their knees cling tight.

The trees bend down
Behind, rides the rain.

TREES

You root deep,
And reach skyward.

Something you say to me
That is under the earth.
Something you say to me
That is over the earth.

What it is,
Perhaps the closed eyes know.
What it is,
Maybe the folded wings know.

PITY NOT

Pity not the dead;
They are comforted.

Should they wake not,
All is forgot.

If they rise again,
Love folds them then.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

SONGS OF THE COAST-DWELLERS

THE CHIEF'S PRAYER AFTER THE SALMON CATCH

O Kia-Kunæ, praise!
Thou hast opened thy hand among the stars,
And sprinkled the sea with food;
The catch is great; thy children will live.
See, on the roofs of the villages, the red meat drying;
Another year thou hast encompassed us with life.
Praise! Praise! Kunæ!
O Father, we have waited with shut mouths,
With hearts silent, and hands quiet,
Waited the time of prayer;
Lest with fears we should beset thee,
And pray the unholy prayer of asking.
We waited silently; and thou gavest life.

Oh, praise! Praise! Praise!

Open the silent mouths, the shut hearts, my tribe:
Sing high the prayer of Thanksgiving,
The prayer He taught in the beginning to the Kwakiutl—
The good rejoicing prayer of thanks.

As the sea sings on the wet shore, when the ice thunders back,
And the blue water floats again, warm, shining, living,
So break thy ice-bound heart, and the cold lip's silence—
Praise Kunæ for life, as wings up-flying, as eagles to the sun.
Praise! Praise! Praise!

SONG OF WHIP-PLAITING

In the dawn I gathered cedar-boughs
For the plaiting of thy whip.
They were wet with sweet drops;
They still thought of the night.

All alone I shredded cedar-boughs,
Green boughs in the pale light,
Where the morning meets the sea,
And the great mountain stops.

Earth was very still.

I heard no sound but the whisper of my knife,
My black flint knife.
It whispered among the white strands of the cedar,
Whispered in parting the sweet cords for thy whip.
O sweet-smelling juice of cedar—
Life-ooze of love!
My knife drips:
Its whisper is the only sound in all the world!

Finer than young sea-lions' hairs
Are my cedar-strands:
They are fine as little roots deep down.
(O little roots of cedar
Far, far under the bosom of Tsa-Kumts!—
They have plaited her through with love.)
Now, into my love-gift
Closely, strongly, I will weave them—
Little strands of pain!
Since I saw thee
Standing with thy torch in my doorway,
Their little roots are deep in me.

In the dawn I gathered cedar-boughs:
Sweet, sweet was their odor,
They were wet with tears—
The sweetness will not leave my hands,
No, not in salt sea-washings.
Tears will not wash away sweetness.
I shall have sweet hands for thy service.

(Ah—sometimes—thou wilt be gentle?
Little roots of pain are deep, deep in me
Since I saw thee standing in my doorway.)

I have quenched thy torch—
I have plaited thy whip.
I am thy Woman!

NO ANSWER IS GIVEN

I am Ah-woa-te, the Hunter.

I met a maiden in the shadow of the rocks;
Her eyes were strange and clear,
Her fair lips were shaped like the bow of dawning.
I asked her name,
Striking my spear in the deep earth for resting.

"I am Kantlak, a maiden, named for the Morning.
On the mountain-top I heard two eagles talking—
The word was Love.
They cried it, beating their wings on each other
Until they bled; and she fell,
Yet, falling, still weakly cried it
To him soaring: and died.
I came to a mossy low valley of flowers.
There I saw Men-iak, the white grouse,
(White with chaste dreams, like the Spring Moon, fairer than flowers).
Through the forest a dark bird swooped, with fierce eyes,
And Men-iak flew down to it.

Her white breast is red-dyed, she lies on the moss;
Yet faintly cries the same strange word.
Hunter, will you come to my little fire and tell me
What Love is?"

I could not see the maiden's face clearly, for the dusk,
Where she sat by her small fire—only her eyes.
In the little flicker I saw her feet; they were bare—
Tireless, slim brown feet.
I saw how fair her lips were—
I drew nearer to cast my log on the fire. I said:
"Maiden, I am the Hunter.
When dusk ends the chase I leave the mighty killing.
Far or near, where gleams some little fire,
I grope through the forest with my heavy log;
Till I find one by the fire, sitting alone without fuel.
I cast my log gladly into the fire—thus.
It grips, the flames mount, the warmth embraces.

"Almost I can see your face, Woman;
The bow of your fair lips is hot with speeded arrows,
Your strange clear eyes have darkened.
Fear not—our fire will outlast the dark."

"Hunter, what of the cold on the bleak hillside
When the log burns gray, and the fire is ashes?"
I replied, "I have never seen this:
When the fire burns low I am asleep."
She said: "What of me, if I sleep not, and see the ashes?"
I yawned; I said: "I know not;
I wake in the sun and go forth."

The bow of her lips was like the moon's cold circle.
She said, "Hunter, you have told me of Love!"
"It may be so," I answered. I wished to sleep.
She said, "Already it is ashes."
I looked and saw that her face was gray,
As if the wind had blown the ashes over it.
I was angry; I said, "Better you had slept."

She said, "Yes—but I lie bleeding on the moss,
Crying this word."
I answered, "This is so; but wherefore?" and asked idly,
"Wherefore remember him who brought to your lone little fire
The log that now is ashes?"
She shivered in the cold dawn;
I saw that her eyes were darker than shadows.
Her fair mouth was like my perfect bow,
But I could fit no more arrows to it.
She said, "Hunter, see how gray are these rocks
Where we have sheltered our brief night."
I looked—they were ashen.
She said: "See how they come together here—and here—
As the knees, the breast, the great brow, the forgotten eyes,
Of a woman,
Sitting, waiting, stark and still,
And always gray;
Though hunters camp each night between her knees,
And little fires are kindled and burned out in her hollows."
It was so; the mountain was a stone woman sitting.
Kantlak said: "She remembers him who turned her fire to ashes;
She waits to know the meaning of her waiting—
Why the love that wounded her can never be cast out."
I asked idly, "Who will tell her?"—
And laughed, for the sun was up. I reached for my arrows;
I drew my strong spear from the deep earth by her feet.
Kantlak looked up to the other gray face, and said,
"No answer is given."
Down to the cold white endless sea-shore
Slowly she went, with bent head.
A young deer cast its leaping shadow on the pool.
I ran upon the bright path, swaying my spear.

Leonora Speyer

MARY MAGDALENE

I think that Mary Magdalene
Was just a woman who went to dine;
And her jewels covered her empty heart,
And her gown was the color of wine.

I think that Mary Magdalene
Sat by a stranger with shining head:
"Haven't we met somewhere?" she asked.
"Magdalene! Mary!" he said.

I think that Mary Magdalene
Fell at his feet and called his name;
Sat at his feet and wept her woe,
And rose up clean of shame.

Nobody knew but Magdalene—
Mary the woman who went to dine—
Nobody saw how he broke the bread
And poured for her peace the wine.

This is the story of Magdalene—
It isn't the tale the Apostles tell,
But I know the woman it happened to,
I know the woman well.

MEASURE ME, SKY!

Measure me, sky!
Tell me I reach by a song
Nearer the stars:
I have been little so long.

Weigh me, high wind!
What will your wild scales record?
Profit of pain,
Joy by the weight of a word.

Horizon, reach out!
Catch at my hands, stretch me taut,
Rim of the world:
Widen my eyes by a thought.

Sky, be my depth;
Wind, be my width and my height;
World, my heart's span:
Loneliness, wings for my flight!

A TRUTH ABOUT A LIE

I lied. . . trusting you knew
I could not lie to you!
Beloved friend, I lied; and am forgiven. But I
Cannot forgive that you believed my lie.

THE HEART LOOKS ON

I urged my mind against my will.
My will shook like a rocking wall
But did not fall;
My mind was like a wind-swept tree;
And neither knew the victory.

I dashed my mind against my will.
They did not break or bend or spill;
But in my heart the songs grew still.

WORDS TO SLEEP UPON

There are words that wait
With the night,
Soft as a pillow
And white,
Cool as a rose in the rain,
Deep as disdain.

My pillow is smooth
To my face,
And its words are like
Whispering lace,
Made of a wingèd design
That is weaving of mine.

But under my pillow
I hide
A song with a singing
Inside—
A locket that hangs on a chain
Of finely-wrought pain.

James Stephens

WHAT TOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

I saw God. Do you doubt it?
Do you dare to doubt it?
I saw the Almighty Man. His hand
Was resting on a mountain, and
He looked upon the World and all about it:
I saw Him plainer than you see me now,
You mustn't doubt it.

He was not satisfied;
His look was all dissatisfied.

His beard swung on a wind far out of sight
Behind the world's curve, and there was light
Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,
"That star went always wrong, and from the start
I was dissatisfied."

He lifted up His hand—
I say He heaved a dreadful hand
Over the spinning Earth, then I said: "Stay—
You must not strike it, God; I'm in the way;
And I will never move from where I stand."
He said, "Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"
And stayed His hand.

BESSIE BOBTAIL

As down the street she wambled slow,
She had not got a place to go:
She had not got a place to fall
And rest herself—no place at all.
She stumped along, and wagged her pate,
And said a thing was desperate.

Her face was screwed and wrinkled tight
Just like a nut—and, left and right,
On either side she wagged her head
And said a thing; and what she said
Was desperate as any word
That ever yet a person heard.

I walked behind her for a while
And watched the people nudge and smile.
But ever as she went she said,
As left and right she swung her head,
—"Oh, God He knows," and "God He knows:"
And surely God Almighty knows.

HATE

My enemy came high,
And I
Stared fiercely in his face.
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
And stern I watched him with a narrow eye.
Then, as I turned away, my enemy,
That bitter heart and savage, said to me:
"Some day, when this is past,
When all the arrows that we have are cast,
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate.
It may seem to us then a mystery
That we could hate each other."
Thus said he,
And did not turn away,
Waiting to hear what I might have to say.
But I fled quickly, fearing if I stayed
I might have kissed him as I would a maid.

THE WASTE PLACES

I

As a naked man I go
Through the desert sore afraid,
Holding up my head although
I'm as frightened as a maid.

The couching lion there I saw
From barren rocks lift up his eye;
He parts the cactus with his paw,
He stares at me as I go by.

He would follow on my trace
If he knew I was afraid,
If he knew my hardy face
Hides the terrors of a maid.

In the night he rises and
He stretches forth, he snuffs the air;
He roars and leaps along the sand,
He creeps and watches everywhere.

His burning eyes, his eyes of bale,
Through the darkness I can see;
He lashes fiercely with his tail,
He would love to spring at me.

I am the lion in his lair;
I am the fear that frightens me;
I am the desert of despair
And the nights of agony.

Night or day, whate'er befall,
I must walk that desert land,
Until I can dare to call
The lion out to lick my hand.

II

As a naked man I tread
The gloomy forests, ring on ring,
Where the sun that's overhead
Cannot see what's happening.

There I go: the deepest shade,
The deepest silence pressing me;
And my heart is more afraid
Than a maiden's heart would be.

Every day I have to run
Underneath the demon tree,
Where the ancient wrong is done
While I shrink in agony.

There the demon held a maid
In his arms, and as she, daft,
Screamed again in fear, he laid
His lips upon her lips and laughed.

And she beckoned me to run,
And she called for help to me,
And the ancient wrong was done
Which is done eternally.

I am the maiden and the fear;
I am the sunless shade, the strife;
I the demon lips, the sneer
Showing under every life.

I must tread that gloomy way
Until I shall dare to run
And bear the demon with his prey
From the forest to the sun.

HAWKS

And as we walked the grass was faintly stirred;
We did not speak—there was no need to speak.
Above our heads there flew a little bird,
A silent one who feared that we might seek
Her hard-hid nest.

Poor little frightened one!
If we had found your nest that sunny day
We would have passed it by; we would have gone
And never looked or frightened you away.

O little bird! there's many have a nest,
A hard-found, open place, with many a foe;
And hunger and despair and little rest,
And more to fear than you can know.

Shield the nests where'er they be,
On the ground or on the tree;
Guard the poor from treachery.

DARK WINGS

Sing while you may, O bird upon the tree!
  Although on high, wide-winged above the day,
Chill evening broadens to immensity,
  Sing while you may.

On thee, wide-hovering too, intent to slay,
  The hawk's slant pinion buoys him terribly—
Thus near the end is of thy happy lay.

The day and thou and miserable me
  Dark wings shall cover up and hide away
Where no songs stirs of bird or memory:
  Sing while you may.

George Sterling

A LEGEND OF THE DOVE

  Soft from the linden's bough,
Unmoved against the tranquil afternoon,
  Eve's dove laments her now:
" Ah, gone! long gone! shall not I find thee soon? "

  That yearning in his voice
Told not to Paradise a sorrow's tale:
  As other birds rejoice
He sang, a brother to the nightingale.

  By twilight on her breast
He saw the flower sleep, the star awake;
  And calling her from rest,
Made all the dawn melodious for her sake.

  And then the Tempter's breath,
The sword of exile and the mortal chain—
  The heritage of death
That gave her heart to dust, his own to pain. . . .

In Eden desolate
The seraph heard his lonely music swoon,
As now, reiterate;
" Ah, gone! long gone! shall not I find thee soon? "

KINDRED

Musing, between the sunset and the dark,
As Twilight in unhesitating hands
Bore from the faint horizon's underlands,
Silvern and chill, the moon's phantasmal ark,
I heard the sea, and far away could mark
Where that unalterable waste expands
In sevenfold sapphire from the mournful sands,
And saw beyond the deep a vibrant spark.

There sank the sun Arcturus, and I thought:
Star, by an ocean on a world of thine,
May not a being, born like me to die,
Confront a little the eternal Naught
And watch our isolated sun decline—
Sad for his evanescence, even as I?

OMNIA EXEUNT IN MYSTERIUM

The stranger in my gates—lo! that am I,
And what my land of birth I do not know,
Nor yet the hidden land to which I go.
One may be lord of many ere he die,
And tell of many sorrows in one sigh,
But know himself he shall not, nor his woe,
Nor to what sea the tears of wisdom flow;
Nor why one star is taken from the sky.

An urging is upon him evermore,
And though he bide, his soul is wanderer,
Scanning the shadows with a sense of haste—

Where fade the tracks of all who went before:
A dim and solitary traveler
On ways that end in evening and the waste.

THE LAST DAYS

The russet leaves of the sycamore
Lie at last on the valley floor—
By the autumn wind swept to and fro
Like ghosts in a tale of long ago.
Shallow and clear the Carmel glides
Where the willows droop on its vine-walled sides.

The bracken-rust is red on the hill;
The pines stand brooding, sombre and still;
Gray are the cliffs, and the waters gray,
Where the seagulls dip to the sea-born spray.
Sad November, lady of rain,
Sends the goose-wedge over again.

Wilder now, for the verdure's birth,
Falls the sunlight over the earth;
Kildees call from the fields where now
The banding blackbirds follow the plow;
Rustling poplar and brittle weed
Whisper low to the river-reed.

Days departing linger and sigh:
Stars come soon to the quiet sky;
Buried voices, intimate, strange,
Cry to body and soul of change;
Beauty, eternal fugitive,
Seeks the home that we cannot give.

Wallace Stevens

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music too.

Music is feeling then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their being throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay.
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed
For so much melody.

Upon the bank she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.

She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids,
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side:

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then the simpering Byzantines,
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.

So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of winter, done repenting.
So maidens die, to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now, in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

IN BATTLE

Death's nobility again
Beautified the simplest men.
Fallen Winkle felt the pride
Of Agamemnon
When he died.

What could London's
Work and waste
Give him—
To that salty, sacrificial taste?

What could London's
Sorrow bring—
To that short, triumphant sting?

SUNDAY MORNING

I

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
And the green freedom of a cockatoo
Upon a rug, mingle to dissipate
The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.

She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
As a calm darkens among water-lights.
The pungent oranges and bright green wings
Seem things in some procession of the dead,
Winding across wide water without sound.
The day is like wide water without sound,
Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
Dominion of the blood and sepulchre.

II

She hears, upon that water without sound,
A voice that cries: " The tomb in Palestine
Is not the porch of spirits lingering;
It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay."
We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency of day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
Of that wide water, inescapable.
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
And in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink
Downward to darkness on extended wings.

III

She says: " I am content when wakened birds,
Before they fly, test the reality
Of misty fields by their sweet questionings;
But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
Return no more, where then is paradise? "
There is not any haunt of prophecy,
Nor any old chimera of the grave,
Neither the golden underground, nor isle
Melodious, where spirits gat them home,
Nor visionary South, nor cloudy palm

Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured
As April's green endures; or will endure
Like her remembrance of awakened birds,
Or her desire for June and evening, tipped
By the consummation of the swallow's wings.

IV

She says, " But in contentment I still feel
The need of some imperishable bliss."
Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her
Alone shall come fulfilment to our dreams
And our desires. Although she strews the leaves
Of sure obliteration on our paths—
The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
Whispered a little out of tenderness—
She makes the willow shiver in the sun
For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet.
She causes boys to bring sweet-smelling pears
And plums in ponderous piles. The maidens taste
And stray impassioned in the littering leaves.

V

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
Their boisterous devotion to the sun—
Not as a god, but as a god might be,
Naked among them, like a savage source.
Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky;
And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
The windy lake wherein their lord delights,
The trees, like seraphim, and echoing hills,
That choir among themselves long afterward.
They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
Of men that perish and of summer morn—
And whence they came and whither they shall go
The dew upon their feet shall manifest.

BOWL

For what emperor
Was this bowl of Earth designed?
Here are more things
Than on any bowl of the Sungs,
Even the rarest:
Vines that take
The various obscurities of the moon,
Approaching rain,
And leaves that would be loose upon the wind;
Pears on pointed trees,
The dresses of women,
Oxen. . . .
I never tire
To think of this.

TATTOO

The light is like a spider:
It crawls over the water;
It crawls over the edges of the snow;
It crawls under your eyelids
And spreads its webs there—
Its two webs.
The webs of your eyes
Are fastened
To the flesh and bones of you
As to rafters or grass.

There are filaments of your eyes
On the surface of the water
And in the edges of the snow.

DEATH OF THE SOLDIER

Life contracts and death is expected,
As in a season of autumn.
The soldier falls.

He does not become a three-days' personage,
Imposing his separation,
Calling for pomp.

Death is absolute and without memorial,
As in a season of autumn,
When the wind stops.

When the wind stops and, over the heavens,
The clouds go, nevertheless,
In their direction.

THE WORMS AT HEAVEN'S GATE

Out of the tomb we bring Badroulbadour
Within our bellies—we her chariot.
Here is an eye; and here are, one by one,
The lashes of that eye and its white lid.

Here is the cheek on which that lid declined,
And, finger after finger, here the hand,
The genius of that cheek. Here are the lips,
The bundle of the body, and the feet.

. . . . . .

Out of the tomb we bring Badroulbadour.

PECKSNIFFIANA

FABLIAU OF FLORIDA

Barque of phosphor
On the palmy beach,

Move outward into heaven,
Into the alabasters
And night blues.

Foam and cloud are one.
Sultry moon-monsters
Are dissolving.

Fill your black hull
With white moonlight.

There will never be an end
To this droning of the surf.

THE WEEPING BURGHER

It is with a strange malice
That I distort the world.

Ah! that ill humors
Should mask as white girls.
And ah! that Scaramouche
Should have a black barouche.

The sorry verities!
Yet in excess, continual,
There is cure of sorrow.

Permit that if as ghost I come
Among the people burning in me still,
I come as belle design
Of foppish line.

And I, then, tortured for old speech—
A white of wildly woven rings;
I, weeping in a calcined heart—
My hands such sharp, imagined things.

PETER PARASOL

Aux taureaux Dieu cornes donne
Et sabots durs aux chevaux . . .

Why are not women fair,
All, as Andromache—
Having, each one, most praisable
Ears, eyes, soul, skin, hair?

Good God! That all beasts should have
The tusks of the elephant,
Or be beautiful
As large ferocious tigers are.

It is not so with women.
I wish they were all fair,
And walked in fine clothes,
With parasols, in the afternoon air.

OF THE SURFACE OF THINGS

I

In my room, the world is beyond my understanding;
But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four hills and a cloud.

II

From my balcony, I survey the yellow air,
Reading where I have written,
"The spring is like a belle undressing."

THE PLACE OF THE SOLITAIRES

Let the place of the solitaires
Be a place of perpetual undulation.

Whether it be in mid-sea
On the dark, green water-wheel,
Or on the beaches,
There must be no cessation
Of motion, or of the noise of motion,
The renewal of noise
And manifold continuation;

And, most, of the motion of thought
And its restless iteration,

In the place of the solitaires,
Which is to be a place of perpetual undulation.

THE PALTRY NUDE STARTS ON A SPRING VOYAGE

But not on a shell, she starts,
Archaic, for the sea.
But on the first-found weed
She scuds the glitters,
Noiselessly, like one more wave.

She too is discontent
And would have purple stuff upon her arms,
Tired of the salty harbors,
Eager for the brine and bellowing
Of the high interiors of the sea.

The wind speeds her,
Blowing upon her hands
And watery back.
She touches the clouds, where she goes,
In the circle of her traverse of the sea.

Yet this is meagre play
In the scurry and water-shine,
As her heels foam—
Not as when the goldener nude
Of a later day

Will go, like the centre of sea-green pomp,
In an intenser calm,
Scullion of fate,
Across the spick torrent, ceaselessly,
Upon her irretrievable way.

SUR MA GUZZLA GRACILE

THE SNOW MAN

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

TEA AT THE PALAZ OF HOON

Not less because in purple I descended
The western day through what you called
The loneliest air, not less was I myself.

What was the ointment sprinkled on my beard?
What were the hymns that buzzed beside my ears?
What was the sea whose tide swept through me there?

Out of my mind the golden ointment rained,
And my ears made the blowing hymns they heard.
I was myself the compass of that sea:

I was the world in which I walked, and what I saw
Or heard or felt came not but from myself;
And there I found myself more truly and more strange.

ANOTHER WEEPING WOMAN

Pour the unhappiness out
From your too bitter heart,
Which grieving will not sweeten.

Poison grows in this dark.
It is in the water of tears
Its black blooms rise.

The magnificent cause of being—
The imagination, the one reality
In this imagined world—

Leaves you
With him for whom no phantasy moves,
And you are pierced by a death.

THE LOAD OF SUGAR-CANE

The going of the glade-boat
Is like water flowing;

Like water flowing
Through the green saw-grass,
Under the rainbows;

Under the rainbows
That are like birds,
Turning, bedizened,

While the wind still whistles
As kildeer do,

When they rise
At the red turban
Of the boatmen.

HIBISCUS ON THE SLEEPING SHORES

I say now, Fernando, that on that day
The mind roamed as a moth roams,
Among the blooms beyond the open sand;

And that whatever noise the motion of the waves
Made on the sea-weeds and the covered stones
Disturbed not even the most idle ear.

Then it was that that monstered moth
Which had lain folded against the blue
And the colored purple of the lazy sea,

And which had drowsed along the bony shores,
Shut to the blather that the water made,
Rose up besprent and sought the flaming red

Dabbled with yellow pollen—red as red
As the flag above the old café—
And roamed there all the stupid afternoon.

LE MONOCLE DE MON ONCLE

I

"Mother of heaven, regina of the clouds,
Sceptre of the sun, crown of the moon,
There is not nothing, no, no, never nothing,
Like the clashed edges of two words that kill."
And so I mocked her in magnificent measure.
Or was it that I mocked myself alone?
I wish that I might be a thinking stone.
The sea of spuming thought foists up again
The radiant bubble that she was. And then
A deep up-pouring from some saltier well,
Within me, bursts its watery syllable.

II

A red bird flies across the golden floor.
It is a red bird that seeks out his choir
Among the choirs of wind and wet and wing.
A torrent will fall from him when he finds.
Shall I uncrumple this much-crumpled thing?
I am a man of fortune greeting heirs;
For it has come that thus I greet the spring.
These choirs of welcome choir for me farewell.
No spring can follow past meridian.
Yet you persist with anecdotal bliss
To make believe a starry *connaissance*.

III

Is it for nothing, then, that old Chinese
Sat tittivating by their mountain pools
Or in the Yangste studied out their beards?
I shall not play the flat historic scale.
You know how Utamaro's beauties sought
The end of love in their all-speaking braids.
You know the mountainous coiffures of Bath.
Alas! Have all the barbers lived in vain,
That not one curl in nature has survived?
Why, without pity on these studious ghosts,
Do you come dripping in your hair from sleep?

IV

This luscious and impeccable fruit of life
Falls, it appears, of its own weight to earth.
When you were Eve, its acrid juice was sweet,
Untasted, in its heavenly orchard air—
An apple serves as well as any skull
To be the book in which to read a round,
And is as excellent, in that it is composed
Of what, like skulls, comes rotting back to ground.
But it excels in this, that as the fruit
Of love, it is a book too mad to read
Before one merely reads to pass the time.

V

In the high West there burns a furious star.
It is for fiery boys that star was set
And for sweet-smelling virgins close to them.
The measure of the intensity of love
Is measure, also, of the verve of earth.
For me, the firefly's quick electric stroke
Ticks tediously the time of one more year.
And you? Remember how the crickets came
Out of their mother grass, like little kin . . .
In the pale nights, when your first imagery
Found inklings of your bond to all that dust.

VI

If men at forty will be painting lakes,
The ephemeral blues must merge for them in one,
The basic slate, the universal hue.
There is a substance in us that prevails.
But in our amours amorists discern
Such fluctuations that their scrivening
Is breathless to attend each quirky turn.
When amorists grow bald, then amours shrink
Into the compass and curriculum
Of introspective exiles, lecturing.
It is a theme for Hyacinth alone.

VII

The mules that angels ride come slowly down
The blazing passes, from beyond the sun.
Descensions of their tinkling bells arrive.
These muleteers are dainty of their way.
Meantime, centurions guffaw and beat
Their shrilling tankards on the table-boards.
This parable, in sense, amounts to this:
The honey of heaven may or may not come,
But that of earth both comes and goes at once.
Suppose these couriers brought amid their train
A damsel heightened by eternal bloom. . . .

VIII

Like a dull scholar I behold, in love,
An ancient aspect touching a new mind.
It comes, it blooms, it bears its fruit and dies.
This trival trope reveals a way of truth.
Our bloom is gone. We are the fruit thereof.
Two golden gourds distended on our vines,
We hang like warty squashes, streaked and rayed,
Into the autumn weather, splashed with frost.
Distorted by hale fatness, turned grotesque.
The laughing sky will see the two of us
Washed into rinds by rotting winter rains.

IX

In verses wild with motion, full of din,
Loudened by cries, by clashes, quick and sure
As the deadly thought of men accomplishing
Their curious fates in war, come, celebrate
The faith of forty, ward of Cupido.
Most venerable heart, the lustiest conceit
Is not too lusty for your broadening.
I quiz all sounds, all thoughts, all everything
For the music and manner of the paladins
To make oblation fit. Where shall I find
Bravura adequate to this great hymn?

X

The fops of fancy in their poems leave
Memorabilia of the mystic spouts,
Spontaneously watering their gritty soils.
I am a yeoman, as such fellows go.
I know no magic trees, no balmy boughs,
No silver-ruddy, gold-vermilion fruits.
But, after all, I know a tree that bears
A semblance to the thing I have in mind.
It stands gigantic, with a certain tip
To which all birds come sometime in their time.
But when they go that tip still tips the tree.

XI

If sex were all, then every trembling hand
Could make us squeak, like dolls, the wished-for words.
But note the unconscionable treachery of fate,
That makes us weep, laugh, grunt and moan, and shout
Doleful heroics, pinching gestures forth
From madness or delight, without regard
To that first foremost law. Anguishing hour!
Last night we sat beside a pool of pink,
Clippered with lilies, scudding the bright chromes,
Keen to the point of starlight, while a frog
Boomed from his very belly odious chords.

XII

A blue pigeon it is that circles the blue sky,
On side-long wing, around and round and round.
A white pigeon it is that flutters to the ground,
Grown tired of flight. Like a dark rabbi, I
Observed, when young, the nature of mankind,
In lordly study. Every day I found
Man proved a gobbet in my mincing world.
Like a rose rabbi, later, I pursued,
And still pursue, the origin and course
Of love, but until now I never knew
That fluttering things have so distinct a shade.

Marion Strobel

SPRING MORNING

O day—if I could cup my hands and drink of you,
And make this shining wonder be
A part of me!
O day! O day!
You lift and sway your colors on the sky
Till I am crushed with beauty. Why is there
More of reeling sunlit air
Than I can breathe? Why is there sound

In silence? Why is a singing wound
About each hour?
And perfume when there is no flower?
O day! O day! How may I press
Nearer to loveliness?

WE HAVE A DAY

We have a day, we have a night
Which have been made for our delight!

Shall we run, and run, and run
Up the path of the rising sun?

Shall we roll down every hill,
Or lie still
Listening while the whispering leaves
Promise what no one believes?

The hours poise, breathless for flight, and bright.

Only a night, only a day—
We must not let them get away;

Don a foolish cap and bell,
For all is well and all is well.

Dance through woods a purple-blue!
Dance into
Lanes that are a hidden stem
Beneath the beauty over them.

The hours lift their shadow-form, are warm.

Why do you still stand mute and white?
The day is passed, but there is night.

Turn your head, give me your lips—
The darkness slips! The darkness slips.

We could make it hushed and still.
If you will
We could hear, close to the ground
Life—the one authentic sound.

The hours, as a startled faun, are gone.

LITTLE THINGS

Little things I'll give to you—
Till your fingers learn to press
Gently
On a loveliness;

Little things and new—
Till your fingers learn to hold
Love that's fragile,
Love that's old.

FRIGHTENED FACE

Child of the frightened face,
  Trying to understand
The little bit of love
  Under your hand,

Holding the little love
  Under fingers that crush
That which is soft as the
  Throat of a thrush,

Holding your hand upon
  The wonder of the thing,
Crushing out the song that
  Wanted to sing:

Child of the frightened face,
  Why do your fingers try
To kill the little love?
  Soon it would die.

DAILY PRAYER

And at last when I go
Will it be so?
Shall I find you behind
The rude platitude of death?

I kneel within the certainty
That you are near to me:
Each day I pray
That I may follow through
To you.
Each day I pray.

Ajan Syrian

THE SYRIAN LOVER IN EXILE REMEMBERS THEE, LIGHT OF MY LAND

Rose and amber was the sunset on the river,
Red-rose the hills about Bingariz.
High upon their brows, the black tree-branches
Spread wide across the turquoise sky.
I saw the parrots fly—
A cloud of rising green from the long green grasses,
A mist of gold and green winging fast
Into the gray shadow-silence of the tamarisks.
Pearl-white and wild was the flood below the ford.
I ran down the long hot road to thy door;
Thy door shone—a white flower in the dusk lingering to close.
The stars rose and stood above thy casement.
I cast my cloak and climbed to thee,
To thee, Makhir Subatu!

. . . . . .

Naked she stood and glistening like the stars over her—
Her hair trailed about her like clouds about the moon—
Naked as the soul seeking love,
As the soul that waits for death.
White with benediction, pendulous, unfolding from the dark

As the crystal sky of morning, she waited,
And leaned her light above the earth of my desire.
Like a world that spins from the hand of Infinity,
Up from the night I leaped—
To thee, Makhir Subatu!

. . . . . .

Pearl-bright and wild, a flood without a ford,
The River of Love flowed on.
Her eyes were gleaming sails in a storm,
Dipping, swooning, beckoning.
The dawn came and trampled over her;
Gay-arched and wide, the sanctuary of light descended.
It was the altar where I lay;
And I lifted my face at last, praying.
I saw the first glow fall about her,
Like marble pillars coming forth from the shadow.
I raised my hands, thanking the gods
That in love I had grown so tall
I could touch the two lamps in heaven,
The sun and moon hanging in the low heaven beneath her face.
How great through love had I grown
To breathe my flame into the two lamps of heaven!

O eyes of the eagle and the dove,
Eyes red-starred and white-starred,
Eyes that have too much seen, too much confessed,
Close, close, beneath my kisses!
Tell me no more, demand me no more—it is day.
I see the gold-green rain of parrot-wings
Sparkling athwart the gray and rose-gold morning.
I go from thy closed door down the long lone road
To the ricefields beyond the river,
Beyond the river that has a ford.

. . . . . .

I came to thee with hope, with desire. I have them no longer.
Sleep, sleep; I am locked in thee.

. . . . . .

Thus the exile lover remembers thee, Makhir Subatu!

Genevieve Taggard

FOR EAGER LOVERS

I understand what you were running for,
Slim naked boy, and why from far inland
You came between dark hills. I know the roar
The sea makes in some ears. I understand.

I understand why you were running now,
And how you heard the sea resound, and how
You leaped and left your valley for the long
Brown road. I understand the song

You chanted with your running, with your feet
Marking the measure of your high heart's beat.
Now you are broken. Seeing your wide brow,
I see your dreams. I understand you now.

Since I have run like you, I understand
The throat's long wish, the breath that comes so quick,
The heart's light leap, the heels that drag so sick,
And warped heat wrinkles, lengthening the sand. . . .

Now you are broken. Seeing your wide brow
I see your dreams, understanding now
The cry, the certainty, wide arms—and then
The way rude ocean rises and descends. . . .

I saw you stretched and wounded where tide ends.
I do not want to walk that way again.

THE ENAMEL GIRL

Fearful of beauty, I always went
Timidly indifferent;

Dainty, hesitant, taking in
Just what was tiniest and thin;

Careful not to care
For burning beauty in blue air;

Wanting what my hand could touch—
That not too much;

Looking not to left nor right
On a honey-silent night;

Fond of arts and trinkets, if
Imperishable and stiff,

They never played me false, nor fell
Into fine dust. They lasted well.

They lasted till you came, and then
When you went sufficed again.

But for you, they had been quite
All I needed for my sight.

You faded. I never knew
How to unfold as flowers do,

Or how to nourish anything
To make it grow. I wound a wing

With one caress, with one kiss
Break most fragile ecstasies. . . .

Now terror touches me when I
Dream I am touching a butterfly.

THE QUIET WOMAN

I will defy you down until my death
With cold body, indrawn breath;
Terrible and cruel I will move with you
Like a surly tiger. If you knew
Why I am shaken, if fond you could see
All the caged arrogance in me,
You would not lean so boyishly, so bold,
To kiss my body, quivering and cold.

SEA-CHANGE

You are no more, but sunken in a sea
Sheer into dream ten thousand leagues you fell;
And now you lie green-golden, while a bell
Swings with the tide, my heart. And all is well
Till I look down, and, wavering, the spell—
Your loveliness—returns. There in the sea,
Where you lie amber-pale and coral-cool,
You are most loved, most lost, most beautiful.

TROPICAL GIRL TO HER GARDEN

Withhold your breath!
Heavy in noon and sleepy as slow death,
Garden of sweets and sours,
The cluster of my body hangs
Odorous with flowers:
Stamen serpent fangs,
Sultry, in showers.

Withhold your hand!
My boughs are bent with gold, my face is fanned
With wings of bees that, thirsting, curve and kiss.
Under green leaves green tendrils coil and hiss;
Gloom-laden branches bear me down too much.
My yellow fruit will fall without a touch
From hanging long in sultriness like this.

Rabindranath Tagore

FROM "GITANJALI"

I

Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger. I am uneasy at heart when I have to leave my accustomed shelter; I forgot that there abides the old in the new, and that there also thou abidest.

Through birth and death, in this world or in others, wherever thou leadest me it is thou, the same, the one companion of my endless life who ever linkest my heart with bonds of joy to the unfamiliar. When one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut. Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the One in the play of the many.

II

No more noisy, loud words from me, such is my master's will. Henceforth I deal in whispers. The speech of my heart will be carried on in murmurings of a song.

Men hasten to the King's market. All the buyers and sellers are there. But I have my untimely leave in the middle of the day, in the thick of work.

Let then the flowers come out in my garden, though it is not their time, and let the midday bees strike up their lazy hum.

Full many an hour have I spent in the strife of the good and the evil, but now it is the pleasure of my playmate of the empty days to draw my heart on to him, and I know not why is this sudden call to what useless inconsequence!

III

On the day when the lotus bloomed, alas, my mind was straying, and I knew it not. My basket was empty and the flower remained unheeded.

Only now and again a sadness fell upon me, and I started up from my dream and felt a sweet trace of a strange smell in the south wind.

That vague fragrance made my heart ache with longing, and it seemed to me that it was the eager breath of the summer seeking for its completion.

I knew not then that it was so near, that it was mine, and this perfect sweetness had blossomed in the depth of my own heart.

IV

By all means they try to hold me secure who love me in this world. But it is otherwise with thy love, which is greater than theirs, and thou keepest me free. Lest I forget them they never venture to leave me alone. But day passes by after day and thou art not seen.

If I call not thee in my prayers, if I keep not thee in my heart—thy love for me still waits for my love.

V

I was not aware of the moment when I first crossed the threshold of this life. What was the power that made me open out into this vast mystery like a bud in the forest at midnight? When in the morning I looked upon the light I felt in a moment that I was no stranger in this world, that the inscrutable without name and form had taken me in its arms in the form of my own mother. Even so, in death the same unknown will appear as ever known to me. And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well. The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away, to find in the very next moment its consolation in the left one.

VI

Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well. O thou beautiful, there in the nest it is thy love that encloses the soul with colors and sounds and odors. There comes the morning, with the golden basket in her right hand, bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth. And there comes the

evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest.

But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor color, and never never a word.

FROM "THE GARDENER"

I

Over the green and yellow rice-fields sweep the shadows of the autumn clouds, followed by the swift-chasing sun.

The bees forget to sip their honey—drunken with the light they foolishly hum and hover; and the ducks in the sandy river-bank clamor in joy for mere nothing.

None shall go back home, brothers, this morning, none shall go to work.

We will take the blue sky by storm and plunder the space as we run.

Laughters fly floating in the air like foams in the flood.

Brothers, we shall squander our morning in futile songs.

II

Keep me fully glad with nothing. Only take my hand in your hand.

In the gloom of the deepening night take up my heart and play with it as you list. Bind me close to you with nothing.

I will spread myself out at your feet and lie still. Under this clouded sky I will meet silence with silence. I will become one with the night, clasping the earth in my breast.

Make my life glad with nothing.

The rains sweep the sky from end to end. Jasmines in the wet untamable wind revel in their own perfume. The cloud-hidden stars thrill in secret. Let me fill to the full of my heart with nothing but my own depth of joy.

III

My soul is alight with your infinitude of stars. Your world has broken upon me like a flood. The flowers of your garden blossom in my body. The joy of life that is everywhere burns like an incense in my heart. And the breath of all things plays on my life as on a pipe of reeds.

IV

Leave off your works, bride. Listen, the guest has come.
Do you hear, he is gently shaking the fastening chain of the door?
Let not your anklets be loud, and your steps be too hurried to meet him.
Leave off your works, bride; the guest has come, in the evening.
No, it is not the wind, bride. Do not be frightened.
It is the full-moon night of April, shadows are pale in the court-yard, the sky overhead is bright.
Draw your veil over your face if you must, take the lamp from your room if you fear.
No, it is not the wind, bride; do not be frightened.

Have no word with him if you are shy, stand aside by the door when you meet him.
If he asks you questions, lower your eyes in silence, if you wish.
Do not let your bracelets jingle, when, lamp in hand, you lead him in.
Have no word with him if you are shy.

Have you not finished your works yet, bride? Listen, the guest has come.
Have you not lit the lamp in the cowshed?
Have you not got ready the offering basket for the evening service?
Have you not put the auspicious red mark at the parting of your hair, and done your toilet for the night?
O bride, do you hear, the guest has come?
Have you not finished your works yet?

V

Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.
If your braiding has come loose, if the parting of your hair be not

straight, if the ribbons of your bodice be not fastened, do not mind.
Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.

Come with quick steps over the grass.
If your feet are pale with the dew, if your anklets slacken, if pearls drop out of your chain, do not mind.
Come with quick steps over the grass.

Do you see the clouds wrapping the sky?
Flocks of cranes fly up from the further riverbank, and fitful gusts of wind rush over the heath.
The anxious cattle run to their stalls in the village.
Do you see the clouds wrapping the sky?

In vain you light your toilet lamp; it flickers and goes out in the wind.
Surely, who would know that with lamp-black your eyelids are not touched? For your eyes are darker than rain clouds.
In vain you light your toilet lamp; it goes out.

Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.
If the wreath is not woven, who cares? If the wrist-chain has not been tied, leave it by.
The sky is overcast with clouds; it is late.
Come as you are, tarry not over your toilet.

VI

Lest I should know you too easily, you play with me.
You blind me with flashes of laughter to hide your tears.
I know, I know your art;
You never say the word you would.

Lest I should prize you not, you elude me in a thousand ways.
Lest I should mix you with the crowd, you stand aside.
I know, I know your art;
You never walk the path you would.

Your claim is more than others; that is why you are silent.
With a playful carelessness you avoid my gifts.

I know, I know your art;
You never accept what you would.

VII

Amidst the rush and roar of life, O Beauty carved in stone, you
stand mute and still, alone and aloof.
Great Time sits enamoured at your feet and repeats to you:
" Speak, speak to me, my love; speak, my mute bride! "
But your speech is shut up in stone, O you immovably fair!

VIII

Tell me if this is all true, my lover?
tell me if it is true.
When the eyes of me flash their lightning on you,
dark clouds in your breast make stormy answer;
Is it then true
that the dew-drops fall from the night when I am seen,
and the morning light is glad when it wraps my body?

Is it true, is it true, that your love
travelled alone through ages and worlds in search of me?
that when you found me at last, your age-long desire
found utter peace in my gentle speech, and my eyes and lips
and flowing hair?

Is it then true
that the mystery of the Infinite is written on this little brow
of mine?
Tell me, my lover, if all this is true?

IX

With a glance of your eyes you could plunder all the wealth of
songs struck from poets' harps, fair woman!
But for their praises you have no ear; therefore do I come to praise
you.
You could humble at your feet the proudest heads of all the world;
But it is your loved ones, unknown to fame, whom you choose
to worship; therefore I worship you.

Your perfect arms would add glory to kingly splendor with their touch;
But you use them to sweep away the dust, and to make clean your humble home; therefore I am filled with awe.

Sara Teasdale

LEAVES

One by one, like leaves from a tree,
All my faiths have forsaken me;
But the stars above my head
Burn in white and delicate red,
And beneath my feet the earth
Brings the sturdy grass to birth.
I who was content to be
But a silken-singing tree,
But a rustle of delight
In the wistful heart of night,
I have lost the leaves that knew
Touch of rain and weight of dew.
Blinded by a leafy crown
I looked neither up nor down—
But the little leaves that die
Have left me room to see the sky;
Now for the first time I know
Stars above and earth below.

MORNING

I went out on an April morning
All alone, for my heart was high.
I was a child of the shining meadow,
I was a sister of the sky.

There in the windy flood of morning
Longing lifted its weight from me,
Lost as a sob in the midst of cheering,
Swept as a sea-bird out to sea.

THE FLIGHT

Look back with longing eyes and know that I will follow,
Lift me up in your love as a light wind lifts a swallow,
Let our flight be far in sun or windy rain—
But what if I heard my first love calling me again?

Hold me on your heart as the brave sea holds the foam,
Take me far away to the hills that hide your home;
Peace shall thatch the roof and love shall latch the door—
But what if I heard my first love calling me once more?

OVER THE ROOFS

I said, "I have shut my heart,
As one shuts an open door,
That Love may starve therein
And trouble me no more."

But over the roofs there came
The wet new wind of May,
And a tune blew up from the curb
Where the street-pianos play.

My room was white with the sun
And Love cried out in me,
"I am strong, I will break your heart
Unless you set me free."

DEBT

What do I owe to you
Who loved me deep and long?
You never gave my spirit wings
Or gave my heart a song.

But oh, to him I loved
Who loved me not at all,
I owe the little gate
That led through heaven's wall.

SONGS IN A HOSPITAL

THE BROKEN FIELD

My soul is a dark ploughed field
  In the cold rain;
My soul is a broken field
  Ploughed by pain.

Where windy grass and flowers
  Were growing
The field lies broken now
  For another sowing.

Great Sower, when you tread
  My field again,
Scatter the furrows there
  With better grain.

OPEN WINDOWS

Out of the window a sea of green trees
  Lift their soft boughs like the arms of a dancer;
They beckon and call me, "Come out in the sun!"
  But I cannot answer.

I am alone with Weakness and Pain,
  Sick abed and June is going,
I cannot keep her, she hurries by
  With the silver-green of her garments blowing.

Men and women pass in the street
  Glad of the shining sapphire weather;
But we know more of it than they,
  Pain and I together.

They are the runners in the sun,
  Breathless and blinded by the race,
But we are watchers in the shade
  Who speak with Wonder face to face.

AFTER DEATH

Now while my lips are living
  Their words must stay unsaid,
And will my soul remember
  To speak when I am dead?

Yet if my soul remembered
  You would not heed it, dear,
For now you must not listen,
  And then you could not hear.

IN MEMORIAM F. O. S.

You go a long and lovely journey,
  For all the stars, like burning dew,
Are luminous and luring footprints
  Of souls adventurous as you.

Oh, if you lived on earth elated,
  How is it now that you can run
Free of the weight of flesh, and faring
  Far past the birthplace of the sun?

SWALLOW FLIGHT

I love my hour of wind and light,
  I love men's faces and their eyes,
I love my spirit's veering flight
  Like swallows under evening skies.

THE ANSWER

When I go back to earth
And all my joyous body
Puts off the red and white
That once had been so proud,
If men should pass above
With false and feeble pity,
My dust will find a voice
To answer them aloud:

"Be still, I am content,
Take back your poor compassion!—
Joy was a flame in me
Too steady to destroy.
Lithe as a bending reed
Loving the storm that sways her—
I found more joy in sorrow
Than you could find in joy."

BLUE SQUILLS

How many million Aprils came
  Before I ever knew
How white a cherry bough could be,
  A bed of squills how blue—

And many a dancing April,
  When life is done with me,
Will lift the blue flame of the flower
  And the white flame of the tree.

Oh, burn me with your beauty then—
  Oh, hurt me, tree and flower,
Lest in the end death try to take
  Even this glistening hour.

O shaken flowers, O shimmering trees,
O sunlit white and blue,
Wound me, that I through endless sleep
May bear the scar of you!

"WHAT DO I CARE?"

What do I care, in the dreams and the languor of spring,
That my songs do not show me at all?
For they are a fragrance, and I am a flint and a fire;
I am an answer, they are only a call.

But what do I care—for love will be over so soon—
Let my heart have its say and my mind stand idly by,
For my mind is proud, and strong enough to be silent—
It is my heart that makes my songs, not I.

ON THE DUNES

If there is any life when death is over,
These tawny beaches will know much of me;
I shall come back, as constant and as changeful
As the unchanging many-colored sea.

If life was small, if it has made me scornful,
Forgive me—I shall straighten like a flame
In the great calm of death, and if you want me
Stand on the seaward dunes and call my name.

"THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS"

War Time

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white.

Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

MY HEART IS HEAVY

My heart is heavy with many a song,
  Like ripe fruit bearing down the tree;
And I can never give you one—
  My songs do not belong to me.

Yet in the evening, in the dusk
  When moths go to and fro,
In the gray hour if the fruit has fallen,
  Take it—no one will know.

IT IS NOT A WORD

It is not a word spoken—
  Few words are said,
Nor even a look of the eyes,
  Nor a bend of the head;
But only a hush of the heart
  That has too much to keep,
Only memories waking
  That sleep so light a sleep.

"LET IT BE FORGOTTEN"

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
  Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold.
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever—
  Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
  Long and long ago—
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
  In a long forgotten snow.

STARS

Alone in the night
  On a dark hill
With pines around me
  Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars
  Over my head,
White and topaz
  And misty red—

Myriads with beating
  Hearts of fire
That aeons
  Cannot vex or tire—

Up the dome of heaven
  Like a great hill,
I watch them marching
  Stately and still;

And I know that I
  Am honored to be
Witness
  Of so much majesty.

Edward Thomas

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE SUN

There's nothing like the sun as the year dies;
Kind as it can be, this world being made so,
To stones and men and beasts and birds and flies—
To all things that it touches except snow,
Whether on mountain side or street or town.
The south wall warms me: November has begun,
Yet never shone the sun as fair as now
While the sweet last-left damsons from the bough
With spangles of the morning's storm drop down
Because the starling shakes it, whistling what
Once swallows sang. But I have not forgot
That there is nothing, too, like March's sun,
Like April's, or July's, or June's, or May's,
Or January's or February's—great days;
And August, September, October, and December
Have equal days, all different from November.
No day of any month but I have said—
Or, if I could live long enough, should say—
" There's nothing like the sun that shines to-day."
There's nothing like the sun till we are dead.

THE WORD

There are so many things I have forgot,
That once were much to me, or that were not—
All lost, as is a childless woman's child
And its child's children, in the undefiled
Abyss of what can never be again.
I have forgot, too, names of the mighty men
That fought and lost or won in the old wars;
Of kings and fiends and gods, and most of the stars.
Some things I have forgot that I forget.

But lesser things there are, remembered yet,
Than all the others. One name that I have not—
Though 'tis an empty thingless name—forgot
Never can die because spring after spring
Some thrushes learn to say it as they sing.
There is always one at midday saying it clear
And tart—the name, only the name I hear.
While perhaps I am thinking of the elder scent
That is like food; or while I am content
With the wild rose scent that is like memory,
This name suddenly is cried out to me
From somewhere in the bushes by a bird
Over and over again, a pure thrush word.

SOWING

It was a perfect day
For sowing; just
As sweet and dry was the ground
As tobacco-dust.

I tasted deep the hour
Between the far
Owl's chuckling first soft cry
And the first star.

A long stretched hour it was;
Nothing undone
Remained; the early seeds
All safely sown.

And now, hark at the rain,
Windless and light,
Half a kiss, half a tear,
Saying good-night.

ADLESTROP

Yes, I remember Adlestrop—
The name—because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop—only the name—

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry;
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

THE MANOR FARM

The rock-like mud unfroze a little, and rills
Ran and sparkled down each side of the road
Under the catkins wagging in the hedge.
But earth would have her sleep out, spite of the sun;
Nor did I value that thin gliding beam
More than a pretty February thing
Till I came down to the old Manor Farm,
And church and yew-tree opposite, in age
Its equals and in size. The church and yew
And farmhouse slept in a Sunday silentness.
The air raised not a straw. The steep farm roof,
With tiles duskily glowing, entertained
The mid-day sun; and up and down the roof
White pigeons nestled. There was no sound but one.

Three cart-horses were looking over a gate
Drowsily through their forelocks, swishing their tails
Against a fly, a solitary fly.
The winter's cheek flushed as if he had drained
Spring, summer, and autumn at a draught
And smiled quietly. But 'twas not winter—
Rather a season of bliss unchangeable,
Awakened from farm and church where it had lain
Safe under tile and thatch for ages since
This England, Old already, was called Merry.

BEAUTY

What does it mean? Tired, angry, and ill at ease,
No man, woman, or child alive could please
Me now. And yet I almost dare to laugh
Because I sit and frame an epitaph—
" Here lies all that no one loved of him
And that loved no one." Then in a trice that whim
Has wearied. But, though I am like a river
At fall of evening when it seems that never
Has the sun lighted it or warmed it, while
Cross breezes cut the surface to a file,
This heart, some fraction of me, happily
Floats through the window even now to a tree
Down in the misting, dim-lit, quiet vale;
Not like a pewit that returns to wail
For something it has lost, but like a dove
That slants unswerving to its home and love.
There I find my rest, and through the dusk air
Flies what yet lives in me. Beauty is there.

Eunice Tietjens

THE BACCHANTE TO HER BABE

Scherzo

Come, sprite, and dance! The sun is up,
The wind runs laughing down the sky
That brims with morning like a cup.
Sprite, we must race him,
We must chase him—
You and I!
And skim across the fuzzy heather—
You and joy and I together
Whirling by!

You merry little roll of fat!—
Made warm to kiss, and smooth to pat,
And round to toy with, like a cub;
To put one's nozzle in and rub
And breathe you in like breath of kine,
Like juice of vine,
That sets my morning heart a-tingling,
Dancing, jingling,
All the glad abandon mingling
Of wind and wine!

Sprite, you are love, and you are joy,
A happiness, a dream, a toy,
A god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
The sun come down in tangled gold,
The moon to kiss, and spring to hold.

There was a time once, long ago,
Long—oh, long since . . . I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot . . .
There was a time when you were not,
You merry sprite, save as a strain,
The strange dull pain
Of green buds swelling

In warm straight dwelling
That must burst to the April rain.
A little heavy I was then,
And dull—and glad to rest. And when
The travail came
In searing flame . . .
But, sprite, that was so long ago!—
A century!—I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot
When you were not.

So, little spritet, come dance with me!
The sun is up, the wind is free!
Come now and trip it,
Romp and skip it,
Earth is young and so are we.
Sprite, you and I will dance together
On the heather;
Glad with all the procreant earth,
With all the fruitage of the trees,
And golden pollen on the breeze,
With plants that bring the grain to birth,
With beast and bird
Feathered and furred,
With youth and hope and life and love,
And joy thereof—
While we are part of all, we two—
For my glad burgeoning in you!

So, merry little roll of fat,
Made warm to kiss and smooth to pat
And round to toy with, like a cub,
To put one's nozzle in and rub,
My god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
Come and dance beneath the sky,
You and I!
Look out with those round wondering eyes,
And squirm, and gurgle—and grow wise!

THE STEAM SHOVEL

Beneath my window in a city street
A monster lairs, a creature huge and grim
And only half believed: the strength of him—
Steel-strung and fit to meet
The strength of earth—
Is mighty as men's dreams that conquer force.
Steam belches from him. He is the new birth
Of old Behemoth, late-sprung from the source
Whence Grendel sprang, and all the monster clan
Dead for an age, now born again of man.

The iron head,
Set on a monstrous jointed neck,
Glides here and there, lifts, settles on the red
Moist floor, with nose dropped in the dirt, at beck
Of some incredible control.
He snorts, and pauses couchant for a space;
Then slowly lifts, and tears the gaping hole
Yet deeper in earth's flank. A sudden race
Of loosened earth and pebbles trickles there
Like blood-drops in a wound.
But he, the monster, swings his load around—
Weightless it seems as air.
His mammoth jaw
Drops widely open with a rasping sound,
And all the red earth vomits from his maw.

O thwarted monster, born at man's decree,
A lap-dog dragon, eating from his hand
And doomed to fetch and carry at command,
Have you no longing ever to be free?
In warm electric days to run a-muck,
Ranging like some mad dinosaur,
Your fiery heart at war
With this strange world, the city's restless ruck,
Where all drab things that toil, save you alone,
Have life;

And you the semblance only, and the strife?
Do you not yearn to rip the roots of stone
Of these great piles men build,
And hurl them down with shriek of shattered steel,
Scorning your own sure doom, so you may feel,
You too, the lust with which your fathers killed?
Or is your soul in very deed so tame,
The blood of Grendel watered to a gruel,
That you are well content
With heart of flame
Thus placidly to chew your cud of fuel
And toil in peace for man's aggrandizement?

Poor helpless creature of a half-grown god,
Blind of yourself and impotent!
At night,
When your forerunners, sprung from quicker sod,
Would range through primal woods, hot on the scent,
Or wake the stars with amorous delight,
You stand, a soiled, unwieldy mass of steel,
Black in the arc-light, modern as your name,
Dead and unsouled and trite;
Till I must feel
A quick creator's pity for your shame:
That man, who made you and who gave so much,
Yet cannot give the last transforming touch;
That with the work he cannot give the wage—
For day, no joy of night,
For toil, no ecstasy of primal rage.

THE GREAT MAN

I cannot always feel his greatness.
Sometimes he walks beside me, step by step,
And paces slowly in the ways—
The simple, wingless ways
That my thoughts tread. He gossips with me then,
And finds it good;

Not as an eagle might, his great wings folded, be content
To walk a little, knowing it his choice,
But as a simple man,
My friend.
And I forget.

Then suddenly a call floats down
From the clear airy spaces,
The great keen lonely heights of being.
And he who was my comrade hears the call
And rises from my side, and soars,
Deep-chanting, to the heights.
Then I remember.
And my upward gaze goes with him, and I see
Far off against the sky
The glint of golden sunlight on his wings.

COMPLETION

My heart has fed today.
My heart, like hind at play,
Has grazed in fields of love, and washed in streams
Of quick imperishable dreams.

In moth-white beauty shimmering,
Lovely as birches in the moon glimmering,
From coigns of sleep my eyes
Saw dawn and love arise.

And like a bird at rest,
Steady in a swinging nest,
My heart at peace lay gloriously
While winds of ecstasy
Beat round me and above.

I am fulfilled of love.

ON THE HEIGHT

The foothills called us, green and sweet;
We dallied, but we might not stay,
And all day long we set our feet
In the wind's way.

We climbed with him the wandering trail
Up to the last keen lonely height—
Where snow-peaks clustered, sharp and frail,
Swimming in light.

Sheer on the edge of heaven we dwelt
And laughed above the blue abyss,
While on my happy lips I felt
Your windy kiss.

You were the spirit of the height,
The breath of sun and air.
A bird dipped wing, and, swift and white,
Peace brooded there.

PARTING AFTER A QUARREL

You looked at me with eyes grown bright with pain,
Like some trapped thing's. And then you moved your head
Slowly from side to side, as though the strain
Ached in your throat with anger and with dread.

And then you turned and left me, and I stood
With a queer sense of deadness over me,
And only wondered dully that you could
Fasten your trench-coat up so carefully—

Till you were gone. Then all the air was quick
With my last words, that seemed to leap and quiver;
And in my heart I heard the little click
Of a door that closes—quietly, forever.

THE CITY WALL

Wusih, China

About the city where I dwell, guarding it close, runs an embattled wall.
It was not new, I think, when Arthur was a king, and plumed knights before a British wall made brave clangor of trumpets, that Launcelot came forth.
It was not new, I think, and now not it but chivalry is old.

Without, the wall is brick, with slots for firing; and it drops straightway into the evil moat, where offal floats and nameless things are thrown.
Within, the wall is earth; it slants more gently down, covered with grass and stubby with cut weeds. Below it in straw lairs the beggars herd, patiently whining, stretching out their sores.
And on the top a path runs.

As I walk, lifted above the squalor and the dirt, the timeless miracle of sunset mantles in the west,
The blue dusk gathers close
And beauty moves immortal through the land.
And I walk quickly, praying in my heart that beauty will defend me, will heal up the too great wounds of China.

I will not look—tonight I will not look—where at my feet the little coffins are,
The boxes where the beggar children lie, unburied and unwatched.
I will not look again, for once I saw how one was broken, torn by the sharp teeth of dogs. A little tattered dress was there, and some crunched bones. . . .
I need not look. What can it help to look?

Ah, I am past!
And still the sunset glows.
The tall pagoda, like a velvet flower, blossoms against the sky; the Sacred Mountain fades, and in the town a child laughs suddenly.
I will hold fast to beauty! Who am I, that I should die for these?

I will go down. I am too sorely hurt, here on the city wall.

THE MOST-SACRED MOUNTAIN

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,
And this sharp exultation, like a cry, after the slow six thousand steps of climbing!
This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks of green; and lower down the flat brown plain, the floor of earth, stretches away to blue infinity.
Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their slow curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;
And with them broods eternity—a swift white peace, a presence manifest.
The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is the end that has no end.

Here, when Confucius came, a half a thousand years before the Nazarene, he stepped, with me, thus into timelessness.
The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that says: "On this spot once Confucius stood and felt the smallness of the world below."
The stone grows old:
Eternity is not for stones.

But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white peace, this stinging exultation.
And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the rhythm of the daily round.
Yet, having known, life will not press so close, and always I shall feel time ravel thin about me;
For once I stood
In the white windy presence of eternity.

Ridgely Torrence

THE BIRD AND THE TREE

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong tonight.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long tonight.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out here beyond the door tonight.
What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet.
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score tonight.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.
They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;
And that's the reason why tonight
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door—
You're out to die tonight.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face:
That's the way you'll know them there—
A white mask to hide the face.

And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant—
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go—
For you it may be better so—
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

THE SON

Southern Ohio Market Town

I heard an old farm-wife,
  Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
  And the name " Charley."

Saying: " The crop's all in,
  We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
  We're just us two now.

" Twelve bushel at sixty cents,
  It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
  He was to be married.

" It feels like frost was near—
  His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
  But the harvest early."

Charles Hanson Towne

BEYOND THE STARS

Three days I heard them grieve when I lay dead,
(It was so strange to me that they should weep!)
Tall candles burned about me in the dark,
And a great crucifix was on my breast,
And a great silence filled the lonesome room.

I heard one whisper, " Lo! the dawn is breaking,
And he has lost the wonder of the day."
Another came whom I had loved on earth,
And kissed my brow and brushed my dampened hair.
Softly she spoke: " Oh, that he should not see
The April that his spirit bathed in! Birds
Are singing in the orchard, and the grass
That soon will cover him is growing green.
The daisies whiten on the emerald hills,
And the immortal magic that he loved
Wakens again—and he has fallen asleep."
Another said: " Last night I saw the moon
Like a tremendous lantern shine in heaven,
And I could only think of him—and sob.
For I remembered evenings wonderful
When he was faint with life's sad loveliness,
And watched the silver ribbons wandering far
Along the shore, and out upon the sea.
Oh, I remembered how he loved the world,
The sighing ocean and the flaming stars,
The everlasting glamour God has given—
His tapestries that wrap the earth's wide room.
I minded me of mornings filled with rain
When he would sit and listen to the sound
As if it were lost music from the spheres.
He loved the crocus and the hawthorn-hedge,
He loved the shining gold of buttercups,

And the low droning of the drowsy bees
That boomed across the meadows. He was glad
At dawn or sundown; glad when Autumn came
With her worn livery and scarlet crown,
And glad when winter rocked the earth to rest.
Strange that he sleeps today when life is young,
And the wild banners of the spring are blowing
With green inscriptions of the old delight."

I heard them whisper in the quiet room.
I longed to open then my sealèd eyes,
And tell them of the glory that was mine.
There was no darkness where my spirit flew,
There was no night beyond the teeming world.
Their April was like winter where I roamed;
Their flowers were like stones where now I fared.
Earth's day! it was as if I had not known
What sunlight meant! . . . Yea, even as they grieved
For all that I had lost in their pale place,
I swung beyond the borders of the sky,
And floated through the clouds, myself the air,
Myself the ether, yet a matchless being
Whom God had snatched from penury and pain
To draw across the barricades of heaven.
I clomb beyond the sun, beyond the moon;
In flight on flight I touched the highest star;
I plunged to regions where the spring is born,
Myself (I asked not how) the April wind,
Myself the elements that are of God.
Up flowery stairways of eternity
I whirled in wonder and untrammeled joy,
An atom, yet a portion of His dream—
His dream that knows no end. . . .
I was the rain,
I was the dawn, I was the purple east,
I was the moonlight on enchanted nights,
(Yet time was lost to me); I was a flower
For one to pluck who loved me; I was bliss,
And rapture, splendid moments of delight;

And I was prayer, and solitude, and hope;
And always, always, always I was love.
I tore asunder flimsy doors of time,
And through the windows of my soul's new sight
I saw beyond the ultimate bounds of space.
I was all things that I had loved on earth—
The very moonbeam in that quiet room,
The very sunlight one had dreamed I lost,
The soul of the returning April grass,
The spirit of the evening and the dawn,
The perfume in unnumbered hawthorn-blooms.
There was no shadow on my perfect peace,
No knowledge that was hidden from my heart.
I learned what music meant; I read the years;
I found where rainbows hide, where tears begin;
I trod the precincts of things yet unborn.

Yea, while I found all wisdom (being dead),
They grieved for me . . . I should have grieved for them!

Mark Turbyfill

STRANGERS

I shall tell you:
I am seeing and seeing strangers
Who are not strangers,
For there is something in their eyes,
And about their faces
That whispers to me
(But so low
That I can never quite hear)
Of the lost half of myself
Which I have been seeking since the beginning of earth;
And I could follow them to the end of the world,
Would they but lean nearer, nearer,
And tell me. . . .

THINGS NOT SEEN

The sea-gull poises
In the charged, expectant air.

The sea-gull poises
With delicate resistance.

Its sheer conscious being
Is cause to strike creation
Out of all this emptiness.

The sea-gull waits,
Wavering slightly
Against this mighty immanence.

So does my heart wait
For the release of a substance
Not yet seen.

PRAYER FOR SOPHISTICATION

Close all open things, O God!
Close the rose,
The throats of flutes and birds.
Close all eyes
To tears not yet fallen.
Close my heart.
Close all open things, O God!

A SONG FOR SOULS UNDER FIRE

Lo, that doves
Should soften
These surging streets!

I found him talking simply and gladly of God,
In the unmoved city of granite
And noise.

Thought kindled in his cheek,
And his white faith
Was the tree in spring
To look upon.

He whispered me he knew the God of Daniel
In the lions' den;
The faith of Joan of Arc
On parapets.

He will walk, a spirit
Of unguessed power,
Into battle.

He will walk unreached
Into fire!

SHAPES

Let us deliberately sit into design,
With these elephant ears
Stretched from the glazed pot
Into green wax consciousness.

Let us exert
Our unused selves
Into other static
Sharpnesses.

In what fleet gestures
Have you found eternity?

His amber-painted torso
A Persian dancer
Has conceived into a leaf-line,
The head inclined.

JOURNEY

Life is more sweet than I
Knew—the shifted scene
Less wavered, more trimmed with light
Than the years before.
Look down. People pass over the ice
As a file of thin ghosts creep
And fade beyond a hill.
You, and you, and you—
Small souls, shrinking away.

And you, and you, and you,
Bearing lights in your hands,
Approaching eternally. Life is
More sweet than I knew.

BENEDICTION

Let no blasphemer till the sacred earth
Or scatter seed upon it,
Lest fruit should fail
And weed-scars sting its fineness.

Send him here who loves its beauty
And its brownness.

He will plow the earth
As a dancer dances—
Ecstatically.

Let no blasphemer till the sacred earth
Or scatter seed upon it.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

LAKE SONG

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The weeping of ancient women
Who grieved without rebellion.

The lake falls over the shore
Like tears on their curven bosoms
Here is languid, luxurious wailing,
The wailing of kings' daughters.

So do we ever cry,
A soft unmutinous crying,
When we know ourselves each a princess
Locked fast within her tower.

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The fertile tears of women
That water the dreams of men.

CLAY HILLS

It is easy to mold the yielding clay,
And many shapes grow into beauty
Under the facile hand.
But forms of clay are lightly broken;
They will lie shattered and forgotten in a dingy corner.

But underneath the slipping clay
Is rock. . . .
I would rather work in stubborn rock
All the years of my life,
And make one strong thing;
And set it in a high clean place
To recall the granite strength of my desire.

SINFONIA DOMESTICA

When the white wave of a glory that is hardly I
Breaks through my mind and washes it clean,
I know at last the meaning of my ecstasy,
And know at last my wish and what it can mean.

To have sped out of life that night—to have vanished
Not as a vision, but as something touched, yet grown
Radiant as the moonlight, circling my naked shoulder;
Wrapped in a dream of beauty, longed for, but never known!

Louis Untermeyer

LANDSCAPES

The rain was over, and the brilliant air
Made every little blade of grass appear
Vivid and startling—everything was there
With sharpened outlines, eloquently clear,
As though one saw it in a crystal sphere.
The rusty sumac with its struggling spires;
The golden-rod with all its million fires
(A million torches swinging in the wind);
A single poplar, marvellously thinned,
Half like a naked boy, half like a sword;
Clouds, like the haughty banners of the Lord;
A group of pansies with their shrewish faces,
Little old ladies cackling over laces;
The quaint unhurried road that curved so well;
The prim petunias with their rich rank smell;
The lettuce-birds, the creepers in the field—
How bountifully were they all revealed!
How arrogantly each one seemed to thrive—
So frank and strong, so radiantly alive!

And over all the morning-minded earth
There seemed to spread a sharp and kindling mirth,
Piercing the stubborn stones until I saw
The toad face heaven without shame or awe,
The ant confront the stars, and every weed
Grow proud as though it bore a royal seed;
While all the things that die and decompose
Sent forth their bloom as richly as the rose. . . .
Oh, what a liberal power that made them thrive
And keep the very dirt that died, alive.

And now I saw the slender willow-tree
No longer calm or drooping listlessly,
Letting its languid branches sway and fall
As though it danced in some sad ritual;
But rather like a young athletic girl,
Fearless and gay, her hair all out of curl,
And flying in the wind—her head thrown back,
Her arms flung up, her garments flowing slack,
And all her rushing spirits running over. . . .
What made a sober tree seem such a rover—
Or made the staid and stalwart apple-trees,
That stood for years knee-deep in velvet peace.
Turn all their fruit to little worlds of flame,
And burn the trembling orchard there below?
What lit the heart of every golden-glow—
Oh, why was nothing weary, dull or tame? . . .
Beauty it was, and keen compassionate mirth
That drives the vast and energetic earth.

And, with abrupt and visionary eyes,
I saw the huddled tenements arise.
Here where the merry clover danced and shone
Sprang agonies of iron and of stone;
There, where green Silence laughed or stood enthralled,
Cheap music blared and evil alleys sprawled.
The roaring avenues, the shrieking mills;
Brothels and prisons on those kindly hills—
The menace of these things swept over me;

A threatening, unconquerable sea. . . .
A stirring landscape and a generous earth,
Freshening courage and benevolent mirth—
And then the city, like a hideous sore. . . .
Good God, and what is all this beauty for?

"FEUERZAUBER"

I never knew the earth had so much gold—
  The fields run over with it, and this hill
Hoary and old,
  Is young with buoyant blooms that flame and thrill.

Such golden fires, such yellow—lo, how good
  This spendthrift world, and what a lavish God!
This fringe of wood,
  Blazing with buttercup and goldenrod.

You too, beloved, are changed. Again I see
  Your face grow mystical, as on that night
You turned to me,
  And all the trembling world—and you—were white.

Aye, you are touched; your singing lips grow dumb;
  The fields absorb you, color you entire. . . .
And you become
  A goddess standing in a world of fire!

ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Jerome Epstein—August 8, 1912

Lo, to the battle-ground of life,
  Child, you have come, like a conquering shout,
Out of a struggle—into strife;
  Out of a darkness—into doubt.

Girt with the fragile armor of youth,
  Child, you must ride into endless wars,

With the sword of protest, the buckler of truth,
And a banner of love to sweep the stars.

About you the world's despair will surge;
Into defeat you must plunge and grope.
Be to the faltering an urge;
Be to the hopeless years a hope!

Be to the darkened world a flame,
Be to its unconcern a blow;
For out of its pain and tumult you came,
And into its tumult and pain you go.

IRONY

Why are the things that have no death
The ones with neither sight nor breath!
Eternity is thrust upon
A bit of earth, a senseless stone.
A grain of dust, a casual clod
Receives the greatest gift of God.
A pebble in the roadway lies—
It never dies.

The grass our fathers cut away
Is growing on their graves today;
The tiniest brooks that scarcely flow
Eternally will come and go.
There is no kind of death to kill
The sands that lie so meek and still. . . .
But Man is great and strong and wise—
And so he dies.

INFIDELITY

You have not conquered me—it is the surge
Of love itself that beats against my will;
It is the sting of conflict, the old urge
That calls me still.

It is not you I love—it is the form
And shadow of all lovers who have died
That gives you all the freshness of a warm
And unfamiliar bride.

It is your name I breathe, your hands I seek;
It will be you when you are gone.
And yet the dream, the name I never speak,
Is that that lures me on.

It is the golden summons, the bright wave
Of banners calling me anew;
It is all beauty, perilous and grave—
It is not you.

WORDS FOR A JIG

To be danced on the grave of an enemy

Thus I pay the visit
Promised years ago.
Tell me, loyal friend, how is it
There below?

Do these weeds and mullein
Choke each angry mood,
Or increase your hard and sullen
Torpitude?

You who sought distractions
Howsoever base,
Have you learned to love inaction's
Slower pace?

Here, at least, you've found that
You belong to earth;
Dying on the careless ground that
Gave you birth.

Do not let it fret you;
Things are not so drear.
Though the heartless world forget you,
I am here!

I have not forgotten
How you loved the stir;
Black at heart and doubly rotten
Though you are.

So I take my fiddle,
And I roar a stave;
Dancing gaily on the middle
Of your grave.

And I tramp the new wood,
And I shout halloo—
All the lively things that you would
Like to do.

Such regard must cheer you
In your misery,
Although I can scarcely hear you
Thanking me.

But I ask no hands in
Thanks or loud applause;
I am glad to sing and dance in
Such a cause.

Thus I pay the visit
Promised years ago. . . .
Tell, me loyal friend, how is it
There below?

Allen Upward

SCENTED LEAVES FROM A CHINESE JAR

THE ACACIA LEAVES

The aged man, when he beheld winter approaching, counted the leaves as they lapsed from the acacia trees; while his son was talking of the spring.

THE BITTER PURPLE WILLOWS

Meditating on the glory of illustrious lineage, I lifted up my eyes and beheld the bitter purple willows growing round the tombs of the exalted Mings.

THE CORAL FISHER

The coral fisher, who had been a long time beneath the water, rose to the surface with nothing in his hand but a spray of crimson seaweed. In answer to the master of the junk he said, "While I was in the world of fishes this miserable weed appeared to me more beautiful than coral."

THE DIAMOND

The poet Wong, after he had delighted a company of mandarins at a feast, sat silent in the midst of his household. He explained, "The diamond sparkles only when it is in the light."

THE ESTUARY

Some one complained to the Master, "After many lessons I do not fully understand your doctrine." In response the Master pointed to the tide in the mouth of the river, and asked, "How wide is the sea in this place?"

THE INTOXICATED POET

A poet, having taken the bridle off his tongue, spoke thus: "More fragrant than the heliotrope, which blooms all the year round, better than vermilion letters on tablets of sandal, are thy kisses, thou shy one!"

THE JONQUILS

I have heard that a certain princess, when she found that she had been married by a demon, wove a wreath of jonquils and sent it to the lover of former days.

THE MARIGOLD

Even as the seed of the marigold, carried by the wind, lodges on the roofs of palaces, and lights the air with flame-colored blossoms, so may the child-like words of the insignificant poet confer honor on lofty and disdainful mandarins.

THE MERMAID

The sailor boy who leant over the side of the Junk of Many Pearls, and combed the green tresses of the sea with his ivory fingers, believing that he had heard the voice of a mermaid, cast his body down between the waves.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

The emperors of fourteen dynasties, clad in robes of yellow silk embroidered with the Dragon, wearing gold diadems set with pearls and rubies, and seated on thrones of incomparable ivory, have ruled over the Middle Kingdom for four thousand years.

THE MILKY WAY

My mother taught me that every night a procession of junks carrying lanterns moves silently across the sky, and the water sprinkled from their paddles falls to the earth in the form of dew. I no longer believe that the stars are junks carrying lanterns, no longer that the dew is shaken from their oars.

THE ONION

The child who threw away leaf after leaf of the many-coated onion to get to the sweet heart, found in the end that he had thrown away the heart itself.

THE SEA-SHELL

To the passionate lover, whose sighs come back to him on every breeze, all the world is like a murmuring sea-shell.

THE STUPID KITE

A kite, while devouring a skylark, complained, "Had I known that thy flesh was no sweeter than that of a sparrow I should have listened longer to thy delicious notes."

THE WINDMILL

The exquisite painter Ko-tsu was often reproached by an industrious friend for his fits of idleness. At last he excused himself by saying, "You are a watermill—a windmill can grind only when the wind blows."

THE WORD

The first time the emperor Han heard a certain Word he said, "It is strange." The second time he said, "It is divine." The third time he said, "Let the speaker be put to death."

John V. A. Weaver

DRUG STORE

Pardon me, lady, but I wanta ast you,
For God's sake, stop that tappin'! I'll go nuts,
Plain bug-house if I hear that tap-tap-tap
Much longer!
Now I went and used such language,
I got to tell you why . . . Well, in the first place,
My business is all shot. Now drugs theirselves
Don't pay much, and the extra stuff, like candy,
Cigars and stationery and et cetery,
Don't make their keep. And that damn soda-fountain—
Excuse me, lady, but I just can't help it! . . .

Some day I'm gointa catch the guy I bought it off—
I'm losin' money every day it's here.
And soda-jerkers—now I can't get none
For love or money, so myself I got to
Mess with them malted milks, banana splits,
And slop like that. And just as doggone sure
As I start workin' on some fine prescription,
The kind I love to mix—got to be careful,
The weights is hittin' on that perfect balance—
Why, then some fool wants a marshmallow sundae,
And tap-tap-tap he starts in on the show-case,
And taps and taps till I come runnin' out,
Leavin' the drugs half-done.
And that ain't all;
Here's the big trouble—I can't talk good grammar.
People don't think a man that mixes drugs

Can do it right and talk the way I do.
It makes me sick—why have I got to sound
Like a school-teacher? Why, I know my stuff:
" Registered Pharmacist "—see? I taught myself,
Workin' at night whiles I was four years clerkin';
And then I took three months down at the U,
And passed a fine exam. But here's the thing:
I quit the public school in seventh grade,
And never paid no attention to my talk.
So it's the way I tell you—they're suspicious
Because I use such slang. I try to stop,
But it's too late now. I found out too late . . .

I got a dream of what I'll do some day:
I want to quit this drug stuff altogether,
Have a nice office, with a big oak desk,
And sell just real estate. I'd like to bet
I'd make a clean-up at it. It'd be swell,
That office . . .
But this life is killin' me.
It's the fool questions they keep askin' me!
You see that clock there? Well, just on a guess
Three times an hour some silly fish comes in here
And calls me out, and asts me, " Is that right?—
Is your clock right? " Honest to Heaven, lady,
One day I got so sore I took a hammer
And smashed the face in. And it cost twelve dollars
To fix it. But I had peace for a week.
Oh, gosh, my nerves! . . . But that's the way it is.
I'm sorry I spoke so rough about that tappin',
But when I get to sellin' real estate,
They'll be no place where folks can take a coin
And tap, and tap, till I come runnin' out.
That's a man's business! . . .
If I ever get it . . .

NOCTURNE

" Nothin' or everythin' it's got to be,"
You says, and hides your face down on my arm.
" If it meant nothin', 'twouldn't do no harm,
Or either everythin'—but this way—see? . . ."

I feel your tremblin' heart against my coat,
An' the big arc-light moon grins down so cool,
" Go on! " I think it says, " you softie fool! " . . .
I love you so it hurts me in my throat . . .

" Don't make me kiss you; sure, I know you could,"
You're pleadin', " an' we gone too far for play;
I care a lot . . . but yet not so's to say
I love you yet . . . Aw, help me to be good! " . . .

O darlin', darlin', can't you let it be
Nothin' to you, an' everythin' to me?

TWO WAYS

Oncet in the museum
  We seen a little rose
In a jar of alcohol—
  You turns up your nose:
" That's the way people think
  Love ought to be—
Last forever! Pickled roses!—
  None o' that for me! "

That night was fireworks
  Out to Riverview—
Gold and red and purple
  Bustin' over you.
" Beautiful! " you says then,
  " That's how love should be!
Burn wild and die quick—
  That's the love for me! "

Now you're gone for good . . . say,
Wasn't they no other way?

Winifred Welles

TRINKET

Now that it is moonlight I must be mournful,
  Darken my eyes and whiten my face;
  Wander by myself with a lonely lily grace.
And here are lovely tears, a whole silver hornful!—
  Blow them like beads upon the velvet of this place.

Forget my blue sash and my gallant yellow ruffle—
  I am now a statue, I am stone-gowned.
So when you blow that silver, mind that you muffle
  The silver sound of blowing; even tears on the ground,
  Falling and pooling, must make no sound.

Just for this moonlight, I think that I shall borrow
  One shiny grief no greater than a star—
(Someone might be fickle, or everyone afar!)
So that I can sit in silence saying, " Sorrow, Sorrow!—
  My very own Sorrow, how adorable you are."

LANGUAGE

I made new speech for you—a secret tongue,
Dearest and best of all in book or scroll.
To hear it spoken was to hear it sung—
I copied all of it upon my soul.
There were those leafy letters, wreathed like vines—
Such trellises of words as Sappho spoke;
Heavy as silver flagons of old wines
Some Latin phrases carved by stately folk.
I could not find a sound for leave-takings
Slower, more sorrowful than Spanish is,
And the French names with flower-dusty wings
Flew in and out among the sentences.
So, with my heart a voice made musical,
I went to you, and did not speak at all.

THE LAST NIGHT OF WINTER

Whose whips are those cracking up the river
  Till the long shudder of sound,
Half a sharp cry and half ecstatic shiver,
  Clutches through the snow at the still ground?

I cannot sleep, so I will light my candle,
  I will lead my shadow down the long stair.
At the far door where someone tries the handle,
  Each of us will whisper, " Who goes there? "

And wood will whimper and stone be shaken—
  While, locked like a heart, the old house grieves,
Rocking in its sleep and yearning to waken
  Warm tears in the silver eaves.

When clouds collapse, when the darkness releases
  A trickle of stars, this house at one bound
Will burst like a bulb and fall to pieces,
  Floor and door one dust on the ground.

Let the windows crackle and curl like paper,
  The rafters slide and the beams fly—
I shall be off on the end of this taper,
  Out through the roof and up through the sky:

Straight as a rocket I shall shoot through the shadow;
  All out of breath and blinking I shall land
In a green gown in a green meadow—
  A crocus, not a candle, in my hand.

Glenway Wescott

THE POET AT NIGHT-FALL

I see no equivalents
For that which I see,
Among words.

And sounds are nowhere repeated,
Vowel for vocal wind
Or shaking leaf.

Ah me, beauty does not enclose life,
But blows through it—
Like that idea, the wind,

Which is unseen and useless,
Even superseded upon
The scarred sea;

Which goes and comes
Altering every aspect—
The poplar, the splashing crest—

Altering all, in that moment
When it is not
Because we see it not.

But who would hang
Like a wind-bell
On a porch where no wind ever blows?

WITHOUT SLEEP

He earns the oblivion of book and shelf
Who will have for muse a Beatrice
Sitting content by the hearth
To whisper his history and thought.

Poet uncuckolded, he hears
No mad ethereal crying
For merciless cloud and ridge
Tormented by the golden horn.

Ah, she will never lift
Her intolerant head like a stag
And scorn him, thinking of wind
And naked hunter and his hallooing hound.

THESE ARE THE SUBTLE RHYTHMS

These are the subtle rhythms, rhythms of sloth:

Mountains which fall in the green swirls
Of twilight as petals, fallen and languid,
Bud in the dawn, and fall again
In the green swirls of twilight, a little
Nearer the stars and the flickering final fires.

These are the rhythms of sloth:
Mountains, my feet on the trails.

I, IN MY PITIFUL FLESH

I, in my pitiful flesh
Transfigured, have woven
Music of wilderness.

And now that my old fear is flung
Aside, I will hold
In my hands what hunger has sung.

From all the roads where I go
Shame like a red mist vanishes.
On—oh . . .

The desert is shaken with cries:
" Come, and I will be kind."
I am the lover with frightened eyes.

John Hall Wheelock

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look—on the topmost branches of the world
The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
Over the huddled rows of stone and brick
A few sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
When this same moment made all mysteries clear—
The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
So tawdry and so dear!

SPRING

The air is full of dawn and spring;
Outside the room I see
A swallow, like a shaft of light,
Shift sideways suddenly.

There is no room for death at all
In earth or heaven above;
He never yet believed in death
Who ever learned to love.

Build me a tomb when I am dead,
But leave a window free
That I may watch the swallow's flight,
And spring come back to me.

Build me a tomb of steel and stone,
  But leave one window free,
That I may feel the spring come back—
  And you come back to me!

LIKE MUSIC

Your body's motion is like music;
  Her stride, ecstatical and bright,
Moves to the rhythm of dumb music,
  The unheard music of delight.

The silent splendor of the creation
  Speaks through your body's stately strength,
And the lithe harmony of beauty
  Undulates through its lovely length.

And rhythmically your bosom's arches,
  Alternately, with every breath
Lift lifeward in long lines of beauty,
  And lapse along the slopes of death.

THE THUNDER-SHOWER

The lightning flashed, and lifted
  The lids of heaven apart,
The fiery thunder rolled you
  All night long through my heart.

From dreams of you at dawn
  I rose to the window ledge:
The storm had passed away,
  The lake lapped on the sedge.

The lyre of heaven trembled
  Still with the thought of you,
The twilight on the waters,
  And all my spirit, too.

SONG

All my love for my sweet
I bared one day to her.
Carelessly she took it,
And like a conqueror
She bowed the neck of my soul
To fit it to her yoke,
And bridled the lips of Song.
Fear within me awoke,
But Love cried: "Swiftly, swiftly
Bear her along the road;
Beautiful is the goal
And beauty is the goad."

ALONE

Ah, never in all my life
Have I ever fled away
From the loneliness that follows
My spirit night and day!

Though I fly to the dearest face,
It follows without rest—
To the kind heart of love,
And the belovèd breast.

Though I walk amid the crowd,
Still I walk apart;
Alone, alone I lie
Even at the loved one's heart.

NIRVANA

Sleep on—I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Over the stars that murmur as they go
Lighting your lattice-window far below.
And every star some of the glory spells
Whereof I know.

I have forgotten you, long long ago;
  Like the sweet, silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
  Sleep on—I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

TRIUMPH OF THE SINGER

I shake my hair in the wind of morning
  For the joy within me that knows no bounds.
I echo backward the vibrant beauty
  Wherewith heaven's hollow lute resounds.

I shed my song on the feet of all men,
  On the feet of all shed out like wine;
On the whole and the hurt I shed my bounty,
  The beauty within me that is not mine.

Turn not away from my song, nor scorn me
  Who bear the secret that holds the sky
And the stars together; but know within me
  There speaks another more wise than I.

Nor spurn me here from your heart to hate me,
  Yet hate me here if you will. Not so
Myself you hate, but the love within me
  That loves you whether you would or no.

Here love returns with love to the lover
  And beauty unto the heart thereof,
And hatred unto the heart of the hater,
  Whether he would or no, with love!

Anna Wickham

THE SINGER

If I had peace to sit and sing,
Then I could make a lovely thing;
But I am stung with goads and whips,
So I build songs like iron ships.

Let it be something for my song,
If it is sometimes swift and strong.

GIFT TO A JADE

For love he offered me his perfect world.
This world was so constricted, and so small,
It had no sort of loveliness at all,
And I flung back the little silly ball.
At that cold moralist I hotly hurled
His perfect, pure, symmetrical, small world.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE QUARRY

My love is male and proper man
And what he'd have he'd get by chase,
So I must cheat as women can
And keep my love from off my face.
'Tis folly to my dawning thrifty thought
That I must run, who in the end am caught.

THE SILENCE

When I meet you, I greet you with a stare;
Like a poor shy child at a fair.
I will not let you love me, yet am I weak:
I love you so intensely that I cannot speak.
When you are gone, I stand apart
And whisper to your image in my heart.

THE TIRED MAN

I am a quiet gentleman,
And I would sit and dream;
But my wife is on the hillside,
Wild as a hill-stream.

I am a quiet gentleman,
And I would sit and think;
But my wife is walking the whirlwind
Through night as black as ink.

Oh, give me a woman of my race
As well controlled as I,
And let us sit by the fire,
Patient till we die!

THE RECOMPENSE

Of every step I took in pain
I had some gain.
Of every night of blind excess
I had reward of half-dead idleness.
Back to the lone road
With the old load!
But rest at night is sweet
To wounded feet;
And when the day is long
There is miraculous reward of song.

Margaret Widdemer

THE BEGGARS

The little pitiful, worn, laughing faces,
Begging of life for joy!

I saw the little daughters of the poor,
Tense from the long day's working, strident, gay,
Hurrying to the picture-place. There curled
A hideous flushed beggar at the door,
Trading upon his horror, eyeless, maimed,
Complacent in his profitable mask,
They mocked his horror, but they gave to him
From the brief wealth of pay-night, and went in
To the cheap laughter and the tawdry thoughts
Thrown on the screen; in to the seeking hand
Covered by darkness, to the luring voice
Of Horror, boy-masked, whispering of rings,
Of silks, of feathers, bought—so cheap!—with just
Their slender starved child-bodies palpitant
For beauty, laughter, passion—that are life:
(A frock of satin for an hour's shame,
A coat of fur for two days' servitude;
"And the clothes last," the thought runs on, within
The poor warped girl-minds drugged with changeless days;
"Who cares or knows after the hour is done?")—
Poor little beggars at life's door for joy!

The old man crouched there, eyeless, horrible,
Complacent in the marketable mask
That earned his comforts—and they gave to him!

But ah, the little painted, wistful faces
Questioning life for joy!

TERESINA'S FACE

He saw it last of all before they herded in the steerage,
  Dark against the sunset where he lingered by the hold—
The tear-stained dusk-rose face of her, the little Teresina,
  Sailing out to lands of gold:

Ah, his days were long, long days, still toiling in the vineyard,
  Working for the gold to set him free to go to her,
Where gay it glowed, the flower-face of little Teresina,
  Where all joy and riches were:

Hard to find one rose-face where the dark rose-faces cluster,
  Where the outland laws are strange and outland voices hum—
Only one lad's hoping, and the word of Teresina,
  Who would wait for him to come!

. . . . . .

God grant he may not find her, since he may not win her freedom,
  Nor yet be great enough to love, in such marred captive guise,
The patient painted face of her, the little Teresina,
  With its cowed, all-knowing eyes!

GREEK FOLK SONG

Under dusky laurel leaf,
  Scarlet leaf of rose,
I lie prone, who have known
  All a woman knows.

Love and grief and motherhood,
  Fame and mirth and scorn—
These are all shall befall
  Any woman born.

Jewel-laden are my hands,
  Tall my stone above—
Do not weep that I sleep,
  Who was wise in love.

Where I walk, a shadow gray,
Through gray asphodel,
I am glad, who have had
All that life can tell.

Florence Wilkinson

OUR LADY OF IDLENESS

They in the darkness gather and ask
Her name, the mistress of their endless task.

The Toilers

Tinsel-makers in factory gloom,
Miners in ethylene pits,
Divers and druggists mixing poisonous bloom;

Huge hunters, men of brawn,
Half-naked creatures of the tropics,
Furred trappers stealing forth at Labrador dawn;

Catchers of beetles, sheep-men in bleak sheds,
Pearl-fishers perched on Indian coasts,
Children in stifling towers pulling threads;

Dark bunchy women pricking intricate laces,
Myopic jewelers' apprentices,
Arabs who chase the long-legged birds in sandy places:

They are her invisible slaves,
The genii of her costly wishes,
Climbing, descending, running under waves.

They strip earth's dimmest cell,
They burn and drown and stifle
To build her inconceivable and fragile shell.

The Artist-Artisans

They have painted a miracle-shawl
Of cobwebs and whispering shadows,
And trellised leaves that ripple on a wall.

They have broidered a tissue of cost,
Spun foam of the sea
And lilied imagery of the vanishing frost.

Her floating skirts have run
Like iridescent marshes,
Or like the tossed hair of a stormy sun.

Her silver cloak has shone
Blue as a mummy's beads,
Green as the ice-glints of an Arctic zone.

. . . . . .

She is weary and has lain
At last her body down.
What, with her clothing's beauty, they have slain!

The Angel with the Sword

Come, brothers, let us lift
Her pitiful body on high,
Her tight-shut hands that take to heaven no gift

But ashes of costly things.
We seven archangels will
Bear her in silence on our flame-tipped wings.

The Toilers

Lo, she is thinner than fire
On a burned mill-town's edge,
And smaller than a young child's dead desire.

Yea, emptier than the wage
Of a spent harlot crying for her beauty,
And grayer than the mumbling lips of age.

A Lost Girl

White as a drowned one's feet
Twined with the wet sea-bracken,
And naked as a Sin driven from God's littlest street.

STUDENTS

John Brown and Jeanne at Fontainebleau—
'Twas Toussaint, just a year ago;
Crimson and copper was the glow
Of all the woods at Fontainebleau.
They peered into that ancient well,
And watched the slow torch as it fell.
John gave the keeper two whole sous,
And Jeanne that smile with which she woos
John Brown to folly. So they lose
The Paris train. But never mind!—
All-Saints are rustling in the wind,
And there's an inn, a crackling fire—
(It's *deux-cinquante*, but Jeanne's desire);
There's dinner, candles, country wine,
Jeanne's lips—philosophy divine!

There was a bosquet at Saint Cloud
Wherein John's picture of her grew
To be a Salon masterpiece—
Till the rain fell that would not cease.
Through one long alley how they raced!—
'Twas gold and brown, and all a waste
Of matted leaves, moss-interlaced.
Shades of mad queens and hunter-kings
And thorn-sharp feet of dryad-things
Were company to their wanderings;
When rain and darkness on them drew.
The rich folks' motors honked and flew.
They hailed an old cab, heaven for two;
The bright Champs-Elysées at last—
Though the cab crawled it sped too fast.

Paris, upspringing white and gold:
Flamboyant arch and high-enscrolled
War-sculpture, big, Napoleonic—
Fierce chargers, angels histrionic;
The royal sweep of gardened spaces,
The pomp and whirl of columned Places;
The *Rive Gauche*, age-old, gay and gray;
The *impasse* and the loved café;
The tempting tidy little shops;
The convent walls, the glimpsed tree-tops;
Book-stalls, old men like dwarfs in plays;
Talk, work, and Latin Quarter ways.

May—Robinson's, the chestnut trees—
Were ever crowds as gay as these?
The quick pale waiters on a run,
The round green tables, one by one,
Hidden away in amorous bowers—
Lilac, laburnum's golden showers.
Kiss, clink of glasses, laughter heard,
And nightingales quite undeterred.
And then that last extravagance—
O Jeanne, a single amber glance
Will pay him!—"Let's play millionaire
For just two hours—on princely fare,
At some hotel where lovers dine
À deux and pledge across the wine!"
They find a damask breakfast-room,
Where stiff silk roses range their bloom.
The garçon has a splendid way
Of bearing in *grand déjeuner*.
Then to be left alone, alone,
High up above Rue Castiglione;
Curtained away from all the rude
Rumors, in silken solitude;
And, John, her head upon your knees—
Time waits for moments such as these.

Marguerite Wilkinson

A WOMAN'S BELOVED

A Psalm

To what shall a woman liken her beloved,
And with what shall she compare him to do him honor?
He is like the close-folded new leaves of the woodbine, odorless but sweet,
Flushed with a new and swiftly rising life,
Strong to grow and give glad shade in summer.
Even thus should a woman's beloved shelter her in her time of anguish.

And he is like the young robin, eager to try his wings,
For within soft-stirring wings of the spirit has she cherished him,
And with the love of the mother bird shall she embolden him, that his flight may avail.

A woman's beloved is to her as the roots of the willow,
Long strong white roots, bedded lovingly in the dark.
Into the depths of her have gone the roots of his strength and of his pride,
That she may nourish him well and become his fulfilment.
None may tear him from the broad fields where he is planted!

A woman's beloved is like the sun rising upon the waters, making the dark places light;
And like the morning melody of the pine trees.
Truly, she thinks the roses die joyously
If they are crushed beneath his feet.

A woman's beloved is to her a great void that she may illumine,
A great king that she may crown, a great soul that she may redeem.
And he is also the perfecting of life,
Flowers for the altar, bread for the lips, wine for the chalice.

You that have known passion, think not that you have fathomed
love.
It may be that you have never seen love's face.
For love thrusts aside storm-clouds of passion to unveil the
heavens,
And, in the heart of a woman, only then is love born.

To what shall I liken a woman's beloved,
And with what shall I compare him to do him honor?
He is a flower, a song, a struggle, a wild storm;
And, at the last, he is redemption, power, joy, fulfilment and
perfect peace.

AN INCANTATION

O great sun of heaven, harm not my love;
Sear him not with your flame, blind him not with your beauty,
Shine for his pleasure!

O gray rains of heaven, harm not my love;
Drown not in your torrent the song of his heart,
Lave and caress him.

O swift winds of heaven, harm not my love;
Bruise not nor buffet him with your rough humor,
Sing you his prowess!

O mighty triad, strong ones of heaven,
Sun, rain, and wind, be gentle, I charge you—
For your mad mood of wrath have me—I am ready—
But spare him, my lover, most proud and most dear,
O sun, rain and wind, strong ones of heaven!

William Carlos Williams

SICILIAN EMIGRANT'S SONG

In New York Harbor

O—eh—lee! La—la!
  Donna! Donna!
Blue is the sky of Palermo;
Blue is the little bay;
And dost thou remember the orange and fig,
The lively sun and the sea breeze at evening?
  Hey—la!
Donna! Donna! Maria!

O—eh—li! La—la!
  Donna! Donna!
Gray is the sky of this land.
Gray and green is the water.
I see no trees, dost thou? The wind
Is cold for the big woman there with the candle.
  Hey—la!
Donna! Donna! Maria!

O—eh—li! O—la!
  Donna! Donna!
I sang thee by the blue waters;
I sing thee here in the gray dawning.
Kiss, for I put down my guitar;
I'll sing thee more songs after the landing.
  O Jesu, I love thee!
Donna! Donna! Maria!

PEACE ON EARTH

The Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue

An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Bears are abroad!
The Eagle is screaming!
Gold against blue
Their eyes are gleaming!
Sleep!
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Sisters lie
With their arms intertwining;
Gold against blue
Their hair is shining!
The Serpent writhes!
Orion is listening!

Gold against blue
His sword is glistening!
Sleep!
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

THE SHADOW

Soft as the bed in the earth
Where a stone has lain—
So soft, so smooth and so cool,
Spring closes me in
With her arms and her hands.

Rich as the smell
Of new earth on a stone,
That has lain, breathing
The damp through its pores—
Spring closes me in
With her blossomy hair;
Brings dark to my eyes.

METRIC FIGURE

There is a bird in the poplars—
It is the sun!
The leaves are little yellow fish
Swimming in the river;
The bird skims above them—
Day is on his wings.
Phoenix!
It is he that is making
The great gleam among the poplars.
It is his singing
Outshines the noise
Of leaves clashing in the wind.

SUB TERRA

Where shall I find you—
You, my grotesque fellows
That I seek everywhere
To make up my band?
None, not one
With the earthy tastes I require:
The burrowing pride that rises
Subtly as on a bush in May.

Where are you this day—
You, my seven-year locusts
With cased wings?
Ah, my beauties, how I long!
That harvest
That shall be your advent—
Thrusting up through the grass,
Up under the weeds,
Answering me—
That shall be satisfying!
The light shall leap and snap
That day as with a million lashes!

Oh, I have you!
Yes, you are about me in a sense,
Playing under the blue pools
That are my windows.
But they shut you out still
There in the half light—
For the simple truth is
That though I see you clear enough . . .
You are not there.

It is not that—it is you,
You I want, my companions!
God! if I could only fathom
The guts of shadows!—
You to come with me
Poking into Negro houses
With their gloom and smell!
In among children
Leaping around a dead dog!
Mimicking
Onto the lawns of the rich!
You!
To go with me a-tip-toe
Head down under heaven,
Nostrils lipping the wind!

SLOW MOVEMENT

All those treasures that lie in the little bolted box whose tiny space is
Mightier than the room of the stars, being secret and filled with dreams:
All those treasures—I hold them in my hand—are straining continually
Against the sides and the lid and the two ends of the little box in which I guard them;
Crying that there is no sun come among them this great while and that they weary of shining;

Calling me to fold back the lid of the little box and to give them sleep finally.

But the night I am hiding from them, dear friend, is far more desperate than their night!
And so I take pity on them and pretend to have lost the key to the little house of my treasures;
For they would die of weariness were I to open it, and not be merely faint and sleepy
As they are now.

POSTLUDE

Now that I have cooled to you
Let there be gold of tarnished masonry,
Temples soothed by the sun to ruin,
That sleep utterly.
Give me hand for the dances,
Ripples at Philae, in and out;
And lips, my Lesbian,
Wallflowers that once were flame.

Your hair is my Carthage
And my arms the bow,
And our words arrows
To shoot the stars
Who from that misty sea
Swarm to destroy us.

But you there beside me—
Oh, how shall I defy you,
Who wound me in the night
With breasts shining
Like Venus and like Mars?
The night that is shouting Jason
When the loud eaves rattle
As with waves above me
Blue at the prow of my desire.

LOVE SONG

What have I to say to you
When we shall meet?
Yet—
I lie here thinking of you.

The stain of love
Is upon the world.
Yellow, yellow, yellow,
It eats into the leaves,
Smears with saffron
The horned branches that lean
Heavily
Against a smooth purple sky.

There is no light—
Only a honey-thick stain
That drips from leaf to leaf
And limb to limb,
Spoiling the colors
Of the whole world.

I am alone.
The weight of love
Has buoyed me up
Till my head
Knocks against the sky.

See me!
My hair is dripping with nectar—
Starlings carry it
On their black wings.
See, at last
My arms and my hands
Are lying idle.

How can I tell
If I shall ever love you again
As I do now?

MAN IN A ROOM

Here, no woman, nor man besides,
Nor child, nor dog, nor bird, nor wasp,
Nor ditch pool, nor green thing. Color of flower,
Blood-bright berry none, nor flame-rust
On leaf, nor pink gall-sting on stem, nor
Staring stone. *Ay de mi!*
No hawthorn's white thorn-tree here, nor lawn
Of buttercups, nor any counterpart:

Bed, book-backs, walls, floor,
Flat pictures, desk, clothes-box, litter
Of paper scrawls. So sit I here,
So stand, so walk about. Beside
The flower-white tree not so lonely I:
Torn petals, dew-wet, blotched yellow my bare instep.

WILLOW POEM

It is a willow when summer is over,
a willow by the river
from which no leaf has fallen nor,
bitten by the sun,
turned orange or crimson.
The leaves cling and grow paler,
swing and grow paler
over the swirling waters of the river
as if loth to let go;
they are so cool, so drunk with
the swirl of the wind and of the river—
oblivious to winter,
the last to let go and fall
into the water and on the ground.

WINTER TREES

All the complicated details
of the attiring and
the disattiring are completed!
A liquid moon
moves gently among
the long branches.
Thus having prepared their buds
against a sure winter,
the wise trees
stand sleeping in the cold.

JANUARY

Again I reply to the triple winds
running chromatic fifths of derision
outside my window:
Play louder.
You will not succeed. I am
bound more to my sentences
the more you batter at me
to follow you.
And the wind,
as before, fingers perfectly
its derisive music.

THE WIDOW'S LAMENT IN SPRINGTIME

Sorrow in my own yard
where the new grass
flames as it has flamed
often before, but not
with the cold fire
that closes round me this year.
Thirty-five years
I lived with my husband.
The plum tree is white today
with masses of flowers.

Masses of flowers
load the cherry branches
and color some bushes
yellow and some red,
but the grief in my heart
is stronger than they;
for though they were my joy
formerly, today I notice them
and turn away forgetting.
Today my son told me
that in the meadows,
at the edge of the heavy woods
in the distance, he saw
trees of white flowers.
I feel that I would like
to go there
and fall into those flowers
and sink into the marsh near them.

TO WAKEN AN OLD LADY

Old age is
a flight of small
cheeping birds
skimming
bare trees
above a snow glaze.
Gaining and failing,
they are buffeted
by a dark wind—
But what?
On harsh weedstalks
the flock has rested—
the snow
is covered with broken
seed-husks,
and the wind tempered
with a shrill
piping of plenty.

Yvor Winters

TWO SONGS OF ADVENT

I

On the desert, between pale mountains, our cries;
Far whispers creeping through an ancient shell.

II

Coyote, on delicate mocking feet,
Hovers down the canyon, among the mountains,
His voice running wild in the wind's valleys.

Listen! listen! for I enter now your thought.

HAWK'S EYES

As a gray hawk's eyes
Turn here and away,
So my course turns
Where I walk each day.

THE WALKER

A leaf turns—
The mind burns.

Thin and clear
Deaths stands here.

His lips bend
For Time's end.

Over all
My feet fall.

THE IMMOBILE WIND

Blue waves within the stone
Turn like deft wrists interweaving.

Emotion, undulant, alone.
Curled wings flow beyond perceiving.

Swift points of sight,
    mystic and amorous little hands,
The wind has drunk
    as water swallows sifting sands.

The wings of a butterfly
Feel of the wind
Tentatively; as men die
In thought, that have not sinned.

THE PRIESTHOOD

We stand apart
That men may see
The lines about our eyes.

We perish, we
Who die in art,
With that surprise

Of one who speaks
To us and knows
Wherein he lies.

DEATH GOES BEFORE ME

Death goes before me on his hands and knees,
And we go down among the bending trees.

Weeping I go, and no man gives me ease—
I am that strange thing that each strange eye sees.

Eyes of the silence, and all life an eye,
Turn in the wind; and always I walk by.

Too still I go, and all things go from me—
As down far autumn beaches a man runs to the sea.

My hands are cold, my lips are thin and dumb.
Stillness is like the beating of a drum.

Charles Erskine Scott Wood

THE POET IN THE DESERT

Extracts from the Prologue

I have come into the desert because my soul is athirst as the desert is athirst;
My soul which is the soul of all; universal, not different.
We are athirst for the waters which make beautiful the path
And entice the grass, the willows and poplars,
So that in the heat of the day we may lie in a cool shadow,
Soothed as by the hands of quiet women, listening to the discourse of running waters; as the voices of women, exchanging the confidences of love.

. . . . . .

The mountains afar girdle the desert as a zone of amethyst;
Pale translucent walls of opal,
Girdling the desert as life is girt by eternity.
They lift their heads high above our tribulation
Into the asure vault of Time;
Theirs are the airy castles which are set upon foundations of sapphire.
My soul goes out to them as the bird to her secret nest.
They are the abode of peace.

. . . . . .

The flowers bloom in the desert joyously—
They do not weary themselves with questioning;
They are careless whether they be seen, or praised.
They blossom unto life perfectly and unto death perfectly, leaving nothing unsaid.
They spread a voluptuous carpet for the feet of the wind,
And to the frolic breezes which overleap them, they whisper:
"Stay a moment, brother; plunder us of our passion;
Our day is short, but our beauty is eternal."

Never have I found a place, or a season, without beauty.
Neither the sea, where the white stallions champ their bits and rear against their bridles,
Nor the desert, bride of the sun, which sits scornful, apart,
Like an unwooed princess, careless, indifferent.
She spreads her garments, wonderful beyond estimation,
And embroiders continually her mantle.
She is a queen, seated on a throne of gold
In the hall of silence.
She insists upon humility.
She insists upon meditation.
She insists that the soul be free.
She requires an answer.
She demands the final reply to thoughts which cannot be answered.
She lights the sun for a torch
And sets up the great cliffs as sentinels:
The morning and the evening are curtains before her chambers.
She displays the stars as her coronet.
She is cruel and invites victims,
Restlessly moving her wrists and ankles,
Which are loaded with sapphires.
Her brown breasts flash with opals.
She slays those who fear her,
But runs her hand lovingly over the brow of those who know her,
Soothing with a voluptuous caress.

She is a courtesan, wearing jewels,
Enticing, smiling a bold smile;
Adjusting her brilliant raiment negligently,

Lying brooding upon her floor which is richly carpeted;
Her brown thighs beautiful and naked.
She toys with the dazzelry of her diadems,
Smiling inscrutably.
She is a nun, withdrawing behind her veil;
Gray, subdued, silent, mysterious, meditative; unapproachable.
She is fair as a goddess sitting beneath a flowering peach-tree, beside a clear river.
Her body is tawny with the eagerness of the sun
And her eyes are like pools which shine in deep canyons.
She is beautiful as a swart woman, with opals at her throat,
Rubies on her wrists and topaz about her ankles.
Her breasts are like the evening and the day stars;
She sits upon her throne of light, proud and silent, indifferent to her wooers.
The sun is her servitor, the stars are her attendants, running before her.
She sings a song unto her own ears, solitary, but it is sufficient—
It is the song of her being. Oh, if I may sing the song of my being it will be sufficient.
She is like a jeweled dancer, dancing upon a pavement of gold;
Dazzling, so that the eyes must be shaded.
She wears the stars upon her bosom and braids her hair with the constellations.

I know the desert is beautiful, for I have lain in her arms and she has kissed me.
I have come to her, that I may know freedom;
That I may lie upon the breast of the mother and breathe the air of primal conditions.
I have come out from the haunts of men;
From the struggle of wolves upon a carcass,
To be melted in Creation's crucible and be made clean;
To know that the law of Nature is freedom.

Edith Wyatt

ON THE GREAT PLATEAU

In the Santa Clara Valley, far away and far away,
Cool-breathed waters dip and dally, linger towards another day—
Far and far away—far away.
Slow their floating step, but tireless, terraced down the great plateau.
Towards our ways of steam and wireless, silver-paced the brook-beds go.
Past the ladder-walled pueblos, past the orchards, pear and quince,
Where the back-locked river's ebb flows, miles and miles the valley glints,
Shining backwards, singing downwards, towards horizons blue and bay.
All the roofs the roads ensconce so dream of visions far away—
Santa Cruz and Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Santa Fé.
Ancient, sacred fears and faiths, ancient, sacred faiths and fears—
Some were real, some were wraiths—Indian, Franciscan years,
Built the kivas, swung the bells; while the wind sang plain and free,
" Turn your eyes from visioned hells!—look as far as you can see! "
In the Santa Clara Valley, far away and far away,
Dying dreams divide and dally, crystal-terraced waters sally—
Linger towards another day, far and far away—far away.

As you follow where you find them, up along the high plateau,
In the hollows left behind them Spanish chapels fade below—
Shaded court and low corrals. In the vale the goat-herd browses.
Hollyhocks are seneschals by the little buff-walled houses.
Over grassy swale and alley have you ever seen it so—
Up the Santa Clara Valley, riding on the Great Plateau?
Past the ladder-walled pueblos, past the orchards, pear and quince,
Where the trenchèd waters' ebb flows, miles and miles the valley glints,
Shining backwards, singing downwards towards horizons blue and bay.

All the haunts the bluffs ensconce so breathe of visions far away,
As you ride near Ildefonso back again to Santa Fé.
Pecos, mellow with the years, tall-walled Taos—who can know
Half the storied faiths and fears haunting green New Mexico?
Only from her open places down arroyos blue and bay,
One wild grace of many graces dallies towards another day.
Where her yellow tufa crumbles, something stars and grasses know,
Something true, that crowns and humbles, shimmers from the
Great Plateau:
Blows where cool-paced waters dally from the stillness of Puyé,
Down the Santa Clara Valley through the world from far away—
Far and far away—far away.

SUMMER HAIL

Once the heavens' gabled door
Opened: down a stabled floor,
Down the thunders, something galloped far and wide,
Glancing far and fleet
Down the silver street—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail! There a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

Good and badness, die away.
Strength and swiftness down the day,
Dapple happy down my glancing silver street!
Oh, the touch of summer cold!—
Beauty swinging quick and bold,
Dipping, dappling where the distant roof-tops meet!
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!

Listen, dusty care:
Through a magic air,
Once I watched the way of perfect splendor ride,

Swishing far and gray,
Buoyant and gay—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.
Good and badness, go your ways,
Vanish far and fleet.
Strength and swiftness run my days,
Down my silver street.
Little care, forevermore
Be you lesser than before.
Mighty frozen rain,
Come! oh, come again!
Let the heavens' door be rended
With the touch of summer cold—
Dappling hoof-beats clatter splendid,
Infinitely gay and bold!
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail and there a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

Once the heavens' gabled door
Opened: down the stabled floor,
Down the thunders something galloped wide and far;
Something dappled far and fleet,
Glancing down my silver street,
And I saw the ways of life just as they are.
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail! There a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

TO F. W.

You are my companion—
Down the silver road,
Still and many-changing,
Infinitely changing.
You are my companion.

Something sings in lives—
Days of walking on and on,
Deep beyond all singing,
Wonderful past singing.

Wonderful our road,
Long and many-changing,
Infinitely changing.
This, more wonderful—
We are here together,
You and I together,
I am your companion;
You are my companion,
My own true companion.

Let the road-side fade:
Morning on the mountain-top,
Hours along the valley,
Days of walking on and on,
Pulse away in silence,
In eternal silence.
Let the world all fade,
Break and pass away;
Yet will this remain,
Deep beyond all singing,
My own true companion,
Beautiful past singing:
We were here together—
I was your companion,
You were my companion,
My own true companion.

A CITY AFTERNOON

Green afternoon serene and bright, along my street you sail away
Sun-dappled like a ship of light that glints upon a rippled bay.
Afar, freight-engines call and toll; the sprays flash on the fragrant grass;
The children and the nurses stroll; the charging motors plunge and pass.
Invisibly the shadows grow, empurpling in a rising tide
The walks where light-gowned women go, white curb, gray asphalt iris-dyed.
A jolting trolley shrills afar; nasturtiums blow, and ivy vines;
Wet scents of turf and black-smoothed tar float down the roof-trees' vergent lines.
Where will you go, my afternoon, that glints so still and swift away,
Blue-shaded like a ship of light bound outward from a wimpled bay?
Oh—thrilling, pulsing, dark and bright, shall you, your work, your pain, your mirth,
Fly into the immortal night and silence of our mother earth?
She bore all Eden's green and dew, and Persia's scented wine and rose,
And, flowering white against the blue, acanthus leaf and marbled pose.
And deep the Maenad's choric dance, Crusader's cross, and heathen crest
Lie sunk with rose and song and lance all veiled and vanished in her breast.

And all those afternoons once danced and sparkled in the sapphire light
And iris shade as you have glanced, green afternoon, in vibrant flight.
As, down dim vistas, echoing, dead afternoons entreat our days,
What breath of beauty will you sing to souls unseen and unknown ways?
How close and how unanswering, green afternoon, you pulse away,
So little and so great a thing—deep towards the bourne of every day.

Elinor Wylie

BEAUTY

Say not of Beauty she is good,
Or aught but beautiful,
Or sleek to doves' wings of the wood
Her wild wings of a gull.

Call her not wicked—that word's touch
Consumes her like a curse;
But love her not too much, too much,
For that is even worse.

Oh, she is neither good nor bad,
But innocent and wild!
Enshrine her and she dies, who had
The hard heart of a child.

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source
And disembodied bones.

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

ATAVISM

I always was afraid of Somes's Pond:
Not the little pond, by which the willow stands,
Where laughing boys catch alewives in their hands
In brown, bright shallows; but the one beyond.
There, when the frost makes all the birches burn
Yellow as cow-lilies, and the pale sky shines
Like a polished shell between black spruce and pines,
Some strange thing tracks us, turning where we turn.

You'll say I dream it, being the true daughter
Of those who in old times endured this dread.
Look! Where the lily-stems are showing red
A silent paddle moves below the water.
A sliding shape has stirred them like a breath;
Tall plumes surmount a painted mask of Death.

William Butler Yeats

EGO DOMINUS TUUS

Hic
On the grey sand beside the shallow stream,
Under your old wind-beaten tower, where still
A lamp burns on beside the open book
That Michael Robartes left, you walk in the moon;
And though you have passed the best of life, still trace,
Enthralled by the unconquerable delusion,
Magical shapes.

Ille By the help of an image
I call to my own opposite, summon all
That I have handled least, least looked upon.

Hic
And I would find myself and not an image.

Ille
That is our modern hope, and by its light
We have lit upon the gentle, sensitive mind
And lost the old nonchalance of the hand.
Whether we have chosen chisel, pen or brush
We are but critics, or but half create,
Timid, entangled, empty and abashed,
Lacking the countenance of our friends.

Hic And yet
The chief imagination of christendom,
Dante Aligieri, so utterly found himself
That he has made that hollow face of his
More plain to the mind's eye than any face
But that of Christ.

Ille And did he find himself,
Or was the hunger that had made it hollow
A hunger for the apple on the bough
Most out of reach? and is that spectral image
The man that Lapo and that Guido knew?
I think he fashioned from his opposite
An image that might have been a stony face,
Staring upon a bedouin's horse-hair roof
From doored and windowed cliff, or half upturned
Among the coarse grass and the camel dung.
He set his chisel to the hardest stone.
Being mocked by Guido for his lecherous life,
Derided and deriding, driven out
To climb that stair and eat that bitter bread,
He found the unpersuadable justice, he found
The most exalted lady loved by a man.

Hic
Yet surely there are men who have made their art
Out of no tragic war—lovers of life,
Impulsive men that look for happiness
And sing when they have found it.

Ille No, not sing;
For those that love the world serve it in action,
Grow rich, popular and full of influence,
And should they paint or write still it is action:
The struggle of the fly in marmalade.
The rhetorician would deceive his neighbors,
The sentimentalist himself; while art
Is but a vision of reality.
What portion in the world can the artist have
Who has awakened from the common dream,
But dissipation and despair?

Hic And yet
No one denies to Keats love of the world.
Remember his deliberate happiness.

Ille
His art is happy, but who knows his mind?
I see a school-boy when I think of him,
With face and nose pressed to a sweet-shop window.
For certainly he sank into his grave
His senses and his heart unsatisfied,
And made—being poor, ailing and ignorant,
Shut out from all the luxury of the world,
The ill-bred son of a livery-stable keeper—
Luxuriant song.

Hic Why should you leave the lamp
Burning alone beside an open book,
And trace these characters upon the sands?
A style is found by sedentary toil
And by the imitation of great masters.

Ille
Because I seek an image not a book,
Those men that in their writings are most wise
Own nothing but their blind stupified hearts.
I call to the mysterious one who yet
Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream

And look most like me, being indeed my double,
And prove if all imaginable things
The most unlike, being my anti-self,
And standing by these characters disclose
All that I seek; and whisper it as though
He were afraid the birds, who cry aloud
Their momentary cries before it is dawn,
Would carry it away to blasphemous men.

THE COLD HEAVEN

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting Heaven
That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice;
And thereupon imagination and heart were driven
So wild that every casual thought of that and this
Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out of season
With the hot blood of youth, of love crossed long ago.
And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to quicken,
Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent
Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken
By the injustice of the skies for punishment?

THAT THE NIGHT COME

She lived in storm and strife;
Her soul had such desire
For what proud death may bring
That it could not endure
The common good of life,
But lived as 'twere a king
That packed his marriage day
With banneret and pennon,
Trumpet and kettledrum,
And the outrageous cannon,
To bundle time away
That the night come.

NO SECOND TROY

Why should I blame her that she filled my days
With misery, or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
Or hurled the little streets upon the great,
Had they but courage equal to desire?
What could have made her peaceful with a mind
That nobleness made simple as a fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
That is not natural in an age like this,
Being high and solitary and most stern?
Why, what could she have done being what she is?—
Was there another Troy for her to burn?

TO A FRIEND WHOSE WORK HAS COME TO NOTHING

Now all the truth is out,
Be secret and take defeat
From any brazen throat.
For how can you compete,
Being honor-bred, with one
Who, were it proved he lies,
Were neither shamed in his own
Nor in his neighbors' eyes?
Bred to a harder thing
Than triumph, turn away
And, like a laughing string
Whereon mad fingers play
Amid a place of stone,
Be secret and exult,
Because of all things known
That is most difficult.

THE COLLAR-BONE OF A HARE

Would I could cast a sail on the water
Where many a king has gone
And many a king's daughter,
And alight at the comely trees and the lawn,
The playing upon pipes and the dancing,
And learn that the best thing is
To change my loves while dancing
And pay but a kiss for a kiss.

I would find by the edge of that water
The collar-bone of a hare
Worn thin by the lapping of water,
And pierce it through with a gimlet, and stare
At the old bitter world where they marry in churches;
And laugh over the untroubled water
At all who marry in churches
Through the white thin bone of a hare.

THE DAWN

I would be ignorant as the dawn,
That has looked down
On that old queen measuring a town
With the pin of a brooch,
Or on the withered men that saw
From their pedantic Babylon
The careless planets in their courses,
The stars fade out where the moon comes,
And took their tablets and did sums.
I would be ignorant as the dawn,
That merely stood, rocking the glittering coach
Above the cloudy shoulders of the horses.
I would be—for no knowledge is worth a straw—
Ignorant and wanton as the dawn.

THE MAGI

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky—
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

THE FISHERMAN

Although I can see him still,
The freckled man who goes
To a grey place on a hill
In grey Connemara clothes
At dawn to cast his flies,
It's long since I began
To call up to the eyes
This wise and simple man.
All day I'd looked in the face
What I had hoped 'twould be
To write for my own race
And the reality:
The living men that I hate,
The dead man that I loved,
The craven man in his seat,
The insolent unreproved—
And no knave brought to book
Who has won a drunken cheer,
The witty man and his joke
Aimed at the commonest ear,
The clever man who cries
The catch-cries of the clown,
The beating down of the wise
And great Art beaten down.

Maybe a twelvemonth since
Suddenly I began,
In scorn of this audience,
Imagining a man,
And his sun-freckled face
And grey Connemara cloth,
Climbing up to a place
Where stone is dark under froth,
And the down turn of his wrist
When the flies drop in the stream—
A man who does not exist,
A man who is but a dream;
And cried, " Before I am old
I shall have written him one
Poem maybe as cold
And passionate as the dawn."

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry;
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky.
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine and fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count.
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams, or climb the air.
Their hearts have grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful.
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes, when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

Marya Zaturensky

MEMORIES

There is a noise, and then the crowded herd
Of noon-time workers flows into the street.
My soul, bewildered and without retreat,
Closes its wings and shrinks, a frightened bird.

Oh, I have known a peace, once I have known
The joy that could have touched a heart of stone—
The heart of holy Russia beating still,
Over a snow-cold steppe and on a hill:
One day in Kiev I heard a great church-bell
Crying a strange farewell.

And once in a great field, the reapers sowing
Barley and wheat, I saw a great light growing
Over the weary bowed heads of the reapers;
As growing sweeter, stranger, ever deeper,
From the long waters sorrowfully strong,
Came the last echoes of the River Song!

Here in this alien crowd I walk apart,
Clasping remembered beauty to my heart!

SONG OF A FACTORY GIRL

It's hard to breathe in a tenement hall,
So I ran to the little park,
As a lover runs from a crowded ball
To the moonlit dark.

I drank in clear air as one will
Who is doomed to die,
Wistfully watching from a hill
The unmarred sky.

And the great trees bowed in their gold and red
Till my heart caught flame;
And my soul, that I thought was crushed or dead,
Uttered a name.

I hadn't called the name of God
For a long time;
But it stirred in me as the seed in sod,
Or a broken rhyme.

AN OLD TALE

What shall we say of her,
Who went the path we knew of? She is dead—
What shall we say of her?

Men who are very old
Still speak of her. They say
That she was far too beautiful; they say
Her beauty wrought her ruin. But they
Are very old.

The old wives break their threads, they shake their heads.
They shake their heads when men will speak of her;
They say she was too beautiful.

I must not think of her, I must
Not speak of her! My mother says
One should not think of her.

She went the path we knew of; she is dead.
They say few knew her truly while she lived,
Though men will speak of her.

It really does not matter she is dead—
One need not think of her. Although one night
Folks heard her weeping, yet beside a pool
One moonlit springtime I could swear she sang!

But she is dead—one must not think of her.

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* Poems.....Alf. A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1920
In *Poetry:* June, 1915 (Vol. VI); Oct., 1915 (VII); Sept., 1916 (VIII).
Ezra Pound, his Metric and Poetry.....Alf. A Knopf, New York: 1917
In *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse*.....Alf. A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1916–17

DONALD EVANS (*Died, 1921*)

Discords.....Brown Brothers, Philadelphia: 1912
Two Deaths in the Bronx.....Nich. L. Brown, Philadelphia: 1915

Nine Poems from a Valetudinarian . . . . . Nich. L. Brown: 1916
* Sonnets from the Patagonian . . . . . Nich. L. Brown: 1918
Ironica . . . . . Nich. L. Brown, New York: 1919

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

From the Isles . . . . . Samurai Press, Cranleigh and London: 1907
The Happy Princess and Other Poems . . . . . Small, Maynard & Co.: 1907
The Earth Passion . . . . . Samurai Press: 1908
The Breaking of Bonds . . . . . Mitchell Kennerley, New York: 1910
Twelve Japanese Painters . . . . . Ralph Fletcher Seymour Co., Chicago: 1913
Mr. Faust . . . . . Mitchell Kennerley: 1913
* Sonnets of a Portrait Painter . . . . . Mitchell Kennerley: 1914
* The Man on the Hilltop . . . . . Mitchell Kennerley: 1915
An April Elegy . . . . . Mitchell Kennerley: 1917
* Sonnets of a Portrait Painter (revised) and Other Sonnets
Mitchell Kennerley: 1922
In *Poetry:* Feb., 1913 (Vol. I); March, 1915 (V); June, 1915 (VI); Nov., 1916 (IX); April & May, 1921 (XVIII).

HILDEGARDE FLANNER

* Young Girl . . . . . H. S. Crocker Co., San Francisco: 1920
* This Morning . . . . . Frank Shay, New York: 1921
In *Poetry:* Feb., 1921 (Vol. XVII).

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Fire and Wine . . . . . Grant Richards, London: 1913
Fool's Gold . . . . . Max Goschen, Ltd., London: 1913
The Dominant City . . . . . Max Goschen, Ltd.: 1913
The Book of Nature . . . . . Constable & Co., Ltd., London: 1913
Visions of the Evening . . . . . Erskine McDonald, London: 1913
* Irradiations . . . . . Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston: 1916
* Goblins and Pagodas . . . . . Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1916
The Tree of Life . . . . . Chatto & Windus, London: 1918
Japanese Prints . . . . . Four Seas Co., Boston: 1918
* Breakers and Granite . . . . . Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1921
* Preludes and Symphonies . . . . . Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1922
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1913 (Vol. III); Sept., 1914 (IV); July, 1915 (VI); March, 1916 (VII); Dec., 1916 (IX); Dec., 1917 (XI); April, 1918 (XII); Dec, 1919 (XV); Oct., 1920 (XVII).
In *Some Imagist Poets:* I–III . . . . . Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1915–16–17.

F. S. FLINT

In the Net of the Stars . . . . . Elkin Mathews, London: 1909
* Cadences . . . . . Poetry Bookshop, London: 1915

The Mosella of Decimus Magnus Ansonius.....The Egoist, London: 1916
Philip II (translated from the French of Emile Verhaeren)
Constable & Co., Ltd., London: 1916
The Love Poems of Emile Verhaeren (Translated from French)
Constable & Co., Ltd.: 1916
The Closed Door (from French of Jean de Bosschère)
John Lane Co., London & New York: 1917
* Otherworld: Cadences.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1920
In *Poetry:* July, 1913 (Vol. II); Feb., 1916 (VII); Jan., 1918 (XI).
In *Des Imagistes*.....Albert & Chas. Boni, New York: 1914
In *Some Imagist Poets:* I–III.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1915–16–17

MOIREEN FOX (Mrs. a Cheavasa)

* Liadain and Curithir.....B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.: 1917
Midyir and Etain.....Candle Press, Dublin: 1918
In *Poetry:* March, 1915 (Vol. V); May, 1917 (X); Jan., 1921 (XVII).

FLORENCE KIPER FRANK

Cinderelline.....Dramatic Publ. Co., Chicago: 1913
* The Jew to Jesus and Other Poems.....Mitchell Kennerley: 1915
In *Poetry:* Oct., 1914 (Vol. V); Dec., 1917 (XI); Nov., 1920 (XVII).

ROBERT FROST

* A Boy's Will.....David Nutt, London: 1913
* A Boy's Will.....Henry Holt & Co., New York: 1915
* North of Boston.....David Nutt, London: 1914
* North of Boston.....Henry Holt & Co., New York: 1915
* Mountain Interval.....Henry Holt & Co.: 1916
(In 1922 William Heinemann took over the publication of Mr. Frost's books in England.)
In *Poetry:* Feb., 1914 (Vol. III); Nov., 1916 (IX); Jan., 1922 (XIX).

HAMLIN GARLAND

Prairie Songs.....Stone & Kimball, Chicago: 1893
In *Poetry:* Nov., 1913 (Vol. III).

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

The Golden Helm.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1903
The Nets of Love.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1905
On the Threshold.....Samurai Press, Cranleigh & London: 1907
The Stonefolds.....Samurai Press: 1907
The Web of Life.....Samurai Press: 1908
Fires I–II.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1912
Daily Bread.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1913

Womenkind.....Adams & Black, London: 1913
Womenkind.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1912
* Borderlands.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1914
* Thoroughfares.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1914
* Borderlands and Thoroughfares.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1914
* Battle and Other Poems
Elkin Mathews, London; Macmillan Co., New York: 1916
Daily Bread.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1916
Fires.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1916
Livelihood.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. & London: 1917
* Poems 1904–1917.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. & London: 1917
Hill Tracks.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. & London: 1918
Neighbors.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. & London: 1920
Krindlesyke.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. & London: 1922
In *Poetry:* June, 1914 (Vol. IV); April, 1915 (VI); Aug., 1915 (VI); March, 1916 (VII); Jan., 1917 (IX).
In *Georgian Poetry:* I–IV.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1912–1919

RICHARD BUTLER GLAENZER

Beggar and King.....Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn.: 1917
In *Poetry:* July, 1914 (Vol. IV); June, 1917 (X); Feb., 1919 (XIII).

DOUGLAS GOLDRING

A Country Boy.....Adelphi Press, London: 1910
Streets.....Max Goschen, London: 1912
In the Town.....Selwyn & Blount, London: 1916
* On the Road.....Selwyn & Blount: 1916
* Streets and Other Verses.....Thomas Seltzer, New York: 1919
In *Poetry:* Sept., 1914 (Vol. IV); May, 1915 (VI).

HERMANN HAGEDORN

The Silver Blade.....Alfred Unger, Berlin: 1907
The Woman of Corinth.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1908
A Troop of the Guard and Other Poems.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1909
* Poems and Ballads.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1909
The Great Maze and The Heart of Youth.....Macmillan Co.: 1916
Hymn of Free Peoples Triumphant.....Macmillan Co.: 1918
In *Poetry:* July & Sept., 1915 (Vol. VI); Dec., 1915 (VII).

HAZEL HALL

* Curtains.....John Lane Co., New York: 1921
* Curtains.....Dodd, Mead & Co., New York: 1922
In *Poetry:* July, 1918 (Vol. XII); April, 1920 (XVI); May, 1921 (XVIII).

THOMAS HARDY

Wessex Poems, and Other Verses....Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London: 1899
Wessex Poems, and Other Verses.....Harper & Bros., N. Y.: 1899
Poems of the Past and the Present.....Macmillan & Co., London: 1901
Poems of the Past and the Present.....Harper & Bros., N. Y.: 1901
The Dynasts: a Drama in Three Parts.....Macmillan & Co.: 1904
The Dynasts: a Drama in Three Parts.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1904
* Time's Laughing-stocks.....Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London: 1909
* Satires of Circumstance.....Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London: 1914
Selected Poems.....Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London: 1916
* Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verse. Macmillan & Co., Ltd.: 1917
* Collected Poems.....Macmillan & Co., London & N. Y.: 1919

DUBOSE HEYWARD

Carolina Chansons (with Hervey Allen).....Macmillan Co.: 1922
In *Poetry:* July, 1920 (Vol. XVI); Aug., 1921 (XVIII); April, 1922 (XX).

RALPH HODGSON

* Eve.....Flying Fame, London: 1913
The Bull.....Flying Fame: 1913
* The Mystery.....Flying Fame: 1913
The Song of Honour.....Flying Fame: 1913
Seven Broadsides (Decorated by Lovat Fraser).....Flying Fame: 1913
All the above re-issued by the Poetry Bookshop, London: 1914.
* Poems.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1917
The Last Blackbird and Other Lines
George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London; Macmillan Co., New York: 1917
In *Georgian Poetry:* II–III.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1915–1917

HORACE HOLLEY

The Inner Garden.....Sherman French & Co., Boston: 1913
The Stricken King.....Shakespeare Head Press, Stratford-on-Avon: 1913
* Divinations and Creation.....Mitchell Kennerley, New York: 1916
In *Poetry:* May, 1915 (Vol. VI); April, 1916 (VIII); Feb., 1921 (XVII).
In *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse* .....Alf. A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1916

HELEN HOYT (Mrs. W. W. Lyman)

In *Poetry:* Aug., 1913 (Vol. II); Aug., 1914 (IV); Aug., 1915 (VI); March, 1917 (IX); Dec., 1918 (XIII); March, 1920 (XV).
In *Masses:* Dec., 1915 (Vol. VIII).
In *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse*....Alf. A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1916–17

FORD MADOX HUEFFER (Ford Madox Ford)

Collected Poems.....Max Goschen, London: 1914
* Antwerp.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1915
* On Heaven and Poems Written on Active Service
John Lane Co., London & New York: 1918
In *Poetry:* June, 1914 (Vol. IV); March, 1917 (IX); April, 1918 (XII); March, 1921 (XVII).

ORRICK JOHNS

* Asphalt and Other Poems.....Alf. A. Knopf, New York: 1917
Black Branches.....Pagan Publishing Co., N. Y.: 1920
In *Poetry:* Feb., 1914 (Vol. V); March, 1917 (IX); May, 1918 (XII).
In *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse*.....Alf. A. Knopf: 1916

FENTON JOHNSON

Visions of the Dusk.....Printed by the Author, N. Y.: 1915
Songs of the Soil.....Printed by the Author, N. Y.: 1916
In *Poetry:* June, 1918 (Vol. XII); Dec., 1921 (XIX).
In *Others for 1919*.....Nich. L. Brown, N. Y.: 1919

JAMES JOYCE

* Chamber Music...Elkin Mathews, London; B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1918
* Chamber Music.....Egoist Press, London: 1922
In *Poetry:* May, 1917 (Vol. X); Nov. 1917 (XI).

ALINE KILMER

* Candles That Burn.....George H. Doran Co., N. Y.: 1919
* Vigils.....George H. Doran Co.: 1921
In *Poetry:* May, 1921 (Vol. XVIII); Oct., 1922 (XXI).

JOYCE KILMER (*Died, 1918*)

Summer of Love.....Doubleday Page & Co.: 1911
* Trees and Other Poems.....George H. Doran Co., New York: 1914
Main Street and Other Poems.....George H. Doran Co.: 1917
Joyce Kilmer: Poems, Essays and Letters; with a Memoir by Robert Coates Holliday.....George H. Doran Co.: 1918
In *Poetry:* Aug., 1913 (Vol. II); April, 1914 (IV); Mar., 1917 (IX).

ALFRED KREYMBORG

* Mushrooms.....John Marshall Co., Ltd., New York: 1916
Plays for Poem-mimes.....The Other Press, New York: 1918
* Blood of Things.....Nich. L. Brown, Philadelphia: 1920

In *Poetry:* Feb., 1916 (Vol. VII); April, 1917 (X); March, 1918 (XI); Jan., 1920 (XV); July, 1922 (XX).
In *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse*.....Alf. A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1916–17

WILLIAM LAIRD

In *Poetry:* July, 1913 (Vol. II); Sept., 1914 (IV); Feb., 1916 (VII).

D. H. LAWRENCE

Love Poems and Others.....Duckworth, London: 1913
* Amores.....Duckworth, London; B. W. Huebsch, New York: 1916
* Look! We have Come Through.....Chatto & Windus, London: 1917
* Look! We have Come Through.....B. W. Huebsch: 1918
New Poems.....Martin Secker, London: 1918
Bay.....Cyril W. Beaumont, Manchester, Eng.: 1919
Tortoises.....Thomas Seltzer, N. Y.: 1921
In *Poetry:* Jan., 1914 (Vol. III); Dec., 1914 (V); June, 1917 (X); July, 1918 (XII); Feb., 1919 (XIII); July, 1919 (XIV).
In *Some Imagist Poets:* I–III.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1915–16–17
In *Georgian Poetry:* I–IV.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1912–1919

AGNES LEE (Mrs. Otto Freer)

Verses for Children.....Copeland and Day, Boston: 1898
Verses for Children.....Small, Maynard & Co., Boston: 1901
The Border of the Lake.....Sherman, French & Co., Boston: 1910
* The Sharing.....Sherman, French & Co.: 1914
* Faces and Open Doors.....Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago: 1922
Théophile Gautier's Émaux et Camées (translated from the French)
George D. Sproul, New York: 1903
Fernand Gregh's La Maison de l'Enfance (translated from the French)
Dodd, Mead & Co., New York: 1907
In *Poetry:* March, 1913 (Vol. I); Dec., 1913 (III); Oct., 1914 (V); Sept. 1915 (VI); Feb., 1916 (VII); April, 1916 (VIII); May, 1917 (X); May 1918 (XII); Dec., 1918 (XIII); Jan., 1919 (XIII); June, 1920 (XVI) Nov., 1921 (XIX).

MUNA LEE (Mrs. Luiz Munoz-Marin)

Sea-change.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: Announced for 1923
In *Poetry:* Jan., 1916 (Vol. VII); Aug., 1917 (X); Aug., 1922 (XX).

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

The Vaunt of Man and Other Poems.....B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1913
Fragments of Empedocles, translated into English verse
Open Court Pub. Co., Chicago: 1908
Æsop and Hyssop (fables in verse).....Open Court Pub. Co.: 1912

Of the Nature of Things, by Lucretius, translated into blank verse
J. M. Dent & Sons, London; E. P. Dutton & Co., New York: 1916
The Lynching Bee and Other Poems.....B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1920
In *Poetry:* Oct., 1913 (Vol. III).

MAURICE LESEMANN

In *Poetry:* April, 1920 (Vol. XVI).

VACHEL LINDSAY

Rhymes to be Traded for Bread...Privately printed, Springfield, Ill.: 1912
The Village Magazine.....Privately printed, Springfield, Ill.: 1912
* General William Booth Enters into Heaven and Other Poems
Mitchell Kennerley, 1913; Macmillan Co.: 1916
* The Congo and Other Poems.....Macmillan Co.: 1915
* The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems.....Macmillan Co.: 1917
The Golden Whales of California..... Macmillan Co.: 1920
In *Poetry:* Jan., 1913 (Vol. I); July, 1913 (II); April and July, 1914 (IV); Feb., 1915 (V); June, 1916 (VIII); July, 1917 (X); Oct., 1917 (XI); Sept., 1918 (XII); Aug., 1919 (XIV).

HANIEL LONG

* Poems.....Moffat, Yard & Co., N. Y.: 1920
In *Poetry:* May, 1918 (Vol. XVII); June, 1921 (XVIII).

AMY LOWELL

* A Dome of Many-coloured Glass .....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1912
* A Dome of Many-coloured Glass.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1914
* Sword Blades and Poppy Seed.....Macmillan Co.: 1914
Men, Women and Ghosts.....Macmillan Co.: 1916
Can Grande's Castle.....Macmillan Co.: 1918
* Pictures of the Floating World.....Macmillan Co.: 1919
Six French Poets.....Macmillan Co.: 1915
Tendencies in Modern American Poetry.....Macmillan Co.: 1917
(In 1921 the Houghton Mifflin Co. took over the publication of all above books by Miss Lowell.)
* Legends..... Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston: 1921
Fir-flower Tablets, Translated from the Chinese by Florence Ayscough, English Versions by Amy Lowell.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1921
In *Poetry:* July, 1913 (Vol. II); April, 1914 (IV); Nov., 1914 (V); April & Sept., 1915 (VI); May & Aug., 1916 (VIII); March, 1917 (IX); Jan., 1918 (XI); Aug., 1918 (XII); Feb., 1919 (XIII); Sept., 1919 (XIV); Nov., 1920 (XVII); Dec., 1922 (XXI).

PERCY MACKAYE

Poems.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1909
Lincoln: Centenary Ode.....Macmillan Co.: 1909
Uriel and Other Poems.....Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston: 1912
The Present Hour.....Macmillan Co.: 1914
The Sistine Eve and Other Poems (reprint of Poems, 1909)
Macmillan Co.: 1915
* Collected Poems.....Macmillan Co.: 1916
Poems and Plays (2 vols.).....Macmillan Co.: 1916

FREDERIC MANNING

The Vigil of Brunhilde.....John Murray, London: 1905
Poems.....John Murray, London: 1908
* Eidola.....John Murray, London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y.: 1917
In *Poetry:* June, 1913 (Vol. II); July, 1916 (VIII); Jan., 1917 (IX).

JOHN MASEFIELD

* Salt Water Ballads.....Grant Richards, London: 1902
Ballads.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1903
Ballads and Poems.....Elkin Mathews: 1910
The Everlasting Mercy.....Sidgwick & Jackson, London: 1911
The Widow in the Bye Street.....Sidgwick & Jackson: 1912
The Everlasting Mercy and the Widow in the Bye Street
Macmillan Co., New York: 1912
The Story of a Round-house and Other Poems (including Dauber)
Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1912
The Daffodil Fields..Wm. Heinemann, London; Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1913
Dauber.....Wm. Heinemann, London: 1914
Philip the King and Other Poems.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1914
Philip the King.....Wm. Heinemann, London: 1914
John M. Synge: a Few Personal Recollections (Edition limited to 500)
Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1915
Good Friday and Other Poems
Wm. Heinemann, London; Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1916
* Sonnets.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1916
* Salt-water Poems and Ballads (reprint).....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1916
* Lollingdon Downs and Other Poems
Wm. Heinemann, London; Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1917
Rosas (autographed ed.).....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1917
* Poems and Plays (collected, 2 vols.).....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1918
A Poem and Two Plays.....Wm. Heinemann, London: 1919
* Enslaved and Other Poems.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1920
Reynard the Fox.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1919
Right Royal.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1922
The Dream (illustrated).....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1922

Esther and Berenice (2 plays tr'd from the French)...Macmillan Co.: 1922
In *Georgian Poetry:* I–III.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1912–15–17

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

A Book of Verses.....Way & Williams, Chicago: 1898
Maximilian, a Tragedy in blank verse.....Richard G. Badger: 1902
The Blood of the Prophets, by Dexter Wallace
Rooks Press, Chicago: 1905
Songs and Sonnets, by Webster Ford.....Rooks Press: 1910
* Spoon River Anthology
Macmillan Co., New York, 1915; T. Werner Laurie, London: 1917
* Songs and Satires.....Macmillan Co.: 1916
* The Great Valley.....Macmillan Co.: 1916
Spoon River Anthology (with additions).....Macmillan Co.: 1916
* Toward the Gulf.....Macmillan Co.: 1918
* Starved Rock.....Macmillan Co.: 1919
(Spoon River Anthology, Songs and Satires, The Great Valley, and Works have been published in England by T. Werner Laurie, London.)
The Domesday Book.
Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1920; Eveleigh Nash, Ltd., London:1921
* The Open Sea.....Macmillan Co.: 1921
In Reedy's *Mirror:* 1914.
In *Poetry:* Feb., 1915 (Vol. V); Nov., 1915 and Mar., 1916 (VII); July, 1916, (VIII); Oct., 1917 (XI); April and June, 1919 (XIV); Jan., 1921 (XVII).

CHARLOTTE MEW

* The Farmer's Bride.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1916
* Saturday Market.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1921

ALICE MEYNELL (*Died, 1922*)

Poems.....John Lane Co., London; Copeland & Day, Boston: 1896
* Later Poems.....John Lane Co., London and N. Y.: 1902
* Poems (including above).....Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y.: 1913
In *Poetry:* March, 1913 (Vol. I).

MAX MICHELSON

In *Poetry:* July, 1915 (Vol. VI); May, 1916 (VIII); Mar., 1917 (IX); Feb., 1918 (XI); Nov., 1918 (XIII); Feb., 1921 (XVII).

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

* Renascence and Other Poems.....Mitchell Kennerley, New York: 1917
* Second April.....Mitchell Kennerley: 1921
Aria Da Capo.....Mitchell Kennerley: 1921
* A Few Figs from Thistles.....Frank Shay, N. Y.: 1921

The Lamp and the Bell.....Frank Shay: 1921
In *Poetry:* Aug., 1917 (Vol. X); June, 1918 (XII); May, 1919 (XIV); May, 1920 (XVI).

HAROLD MONRO

Judas.....Sampson Low, London: 1908
Before Dawn.....Constable & Co., Ltd., London: 1911
* Children of Love.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1914
Trees.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1915
Strange Meetings.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1917
* Real Property....Poetry Bookshop, London; Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1922
In *Poetry:* Sept., 1916 (Vol. VIII); March, 1920 (XV); Feb., 1921 (XVII); Feb., 1922 (XIX).
In *Georgian Poetry:* I–IV.....Poetry Bookshop, London: 1912–1919

HARRIET MONROE

Valeria and Other Poems.....Privately printed: 1892
Valeria and Other Poems.....A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago: 1893
Columbian Ode (with decorations by Will. H. Bradley)
W. Irving Way & Co., Chicago: 1893
The Passing Show.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1903
* You and I.....Macmillan Co.: 1914
In *Poetry:* Nov., 1912 (Vol. I); Feb., 1914 (III); Sept., 1914 (IV); Aug., 1915 (VI); Nov., 1916 and Jan., 1917 (IX); March, 1918 (XI); April, 1918 (XII); Dec., 1918 (XIII); Dec., 1921 (XIX); July, 1922 (XX).

MARIANNE MOORE

* Poems.....Egoist Press, London: 1921
In *Poetry:* May, 1915 (Vol. VI).
In *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse*..Nich. L. Brown, N. Y.: 1916–17

JOHN G. NEIHARDT

The Divine Enchantment.....James T. White & Co., N. Y.: 1900 (*cir.*)
A Bundle of Myrrh.....Outing Co., New York: 1907
* Man-Song.....Mitchell Kennerley, New York: 1909
The Stranger at the Gate.....Mitchell Kennerley: 1912
The Song of Hugh Glass.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1915
* The Quest (Collected Lyrics).....Macmillan Co.: 1916
The Song of Three Friends.....Macmillan Co.: 1919
In *Poetry:* May, 1913 (Vol. II).

ROBERT NICHOLS

Invocation and Other War Poems.....Chatto & Windus: 1915
* Ardours and Endurances.....Frederick A. Stokes Co., N. Y.: 1917

The Assault and Other Poems.....Chatto & Windus: 1918
Aurelia and Other Poems.....E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y.: 1920
In *Poetry:* July, 1919 (Vol. XIV); Nov., 1919 (XV).

YONE NOGUCHI

From the Eastern Sea: Privately printed, London: 1906; Elkin Mathews, London: 1910; Japan Press, Tokio: 1910
* The Pilgrimage..... The Valley Press, Kamakura, Japan: 1909; Elkin Mathews, London; Mitchell Kennerley, New York: 1912
Spirit of Japanese Poetry.....E. P. Dutton & Co., New York: 1914
Japanese Hokkus.....Four Seas Co., Boston: 1920
Seen and Unseen.....Orientalia, N. Y.: 1920
Selected Poems.....Four Seas Co.: 1921
* Collected Poems.....Four Seas Co.: 1921
In *Poetry:* Nov., 1919 (Vol. XV).

GRACE FALLOW NORTON

Little Gray Songs from St. Joseph's.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1912
* The Sister of the Wind.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1914
Roads.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1916
What is Your Legion?.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1916
In *Poetry:* Jan., 1914 (Vol. III); Dec., 1915 (VII); Feb., 1920 (XV); Jan., 1922 (XIX).

JAMES OPPENHEIM

Monday Morning and Other Poems....Sturgis & Walton Co., N. Y.: 1909
The Pioneers.....B. W. Huebsch, New York: 1910
* Songs for the New Age.....Century Co., New York: 1914
War and Laughter.....Century Co., New York: 1916
The Book of Self.....Alf. A. Knopf, New York: 1917
The Solitary.....B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1919
The Mystic Warrior.....Alfred A. Knopf: 1921

PATRICK ORR

In *Poetry:* Jan., 1915 (Vol. V).

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

New Songs (in collaboration).....O'Donoghue, Dublin: 1904
The Twilight People.....Whaley, Dublin: 1905
Verses, Sacred and Profane.....Maunsel & Co., Ltd., Dublin: 1908
The Earth Lover.....New Nation Press, Dublin: 1909
Selected Lyrics.....Thos. B. Mosher, Portland, Maine: 1910
Poems.....Maunsel & Co., Ltd.: 1912
An Epilogue and Other Poems.....Maunsel & Co., Ltd.: 1914

Requiem and Other Poems.....Privately ptd., Dublin: 1917
* The Rosses and Other Poems.....Maunsel & Co., Ltd.: 1918
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1914 (Vol. V).

WILFRID OWEN (*Died, 1918*)

* Poems .....Chatto & Windus, London; B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1921

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY (Mrs. Lionel S. Marks—*Died, 1922*)

The Wayfarers.....Copeland & Day, Boston: 1898
Marlowe, A Drama.....Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston: 1901
The Singing Leaves.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1903
The Book of the Little Past.....Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908
Fortune and Men's Eyes.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1909
* The Singing Man.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1911
The Piper.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1911
The Wolf of Gubbio.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1914
* Harvest Moon.....Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1916

PADRAIC PEARSE (*Died, 1916*)

The Singer and Other Poems.....Maunsel & Co., Ltd., Dublin: 1919
* Collected Poems.....Fred. A. Stokes Co., N. Y.: 1919

EZRA POUND

A Lume Spento (ed. of 100).....Autonelli, Venice, Italy: 1908
A Quinzaine for this Yule
Pollock, London (100); Elkin Mathews, London (100): 1908
* Personæ.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1909
* Exultations.....Elkin Mathews: 1909
Provença.....Small, Maynard & Co., Boston: 1910
Canzoni.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1911
* Ripostes.....Stephen Swift & Co., Ltd., London: 1912
Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti
Small, Maynard & Co., Boston; Stephen Swift & Co., London: 1912
* Poems (Vols. I–II).....Elkin Mathews: 1913
* Cathay.....Elkin Mathews: 1915
* Lustra.....Elkin Mathews: 1916
* Lustra, with Earlier Poems.....Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 1917
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* Umbra.....Elkin Mathews, London: 1920

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JOHN REED (*Died, 1921*)

* Sangar ..... Privately printed, Riverside, Conn.: 1912
The Day in Bohemia ..... Privately printed, Riverside, Conn.: 1913
Tamburlaine and Other Poems.... Fred. C. Bursch, Riverside, Conn.: 1916
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1912 (Vol. I); Apr., 1914 (IV); Aug., 1917 (X); Apr., 1919 (XIV).

ERNEST RHYS

The Great Cockney Tragedy ..... T. Fisher Unwin, London: 1891
A London Rose and Other Rhymes ..... John Lane, London: 1894
Welsh Ballads ..... David Nutt, London: 1898
Guenevere ..... J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London: 1905
Lays of the Round Table ..... J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.: 1905
Enid ..... J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.: 1908
The Masque of the Grail ..... Elkin Mathews, London: 1908
The Leaf-burners ..... J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.: 1916
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LOLA RIDGE

* The Ghetto and Other Poems ..... B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1919
* Sun-up ..... B. W. Huebsch: 1920
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In *Others for 1919* ..... Nich. L. Brown, N. Y.: 1919

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS

* Under the Tree ..... B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: (Announced for 1923)
In *Poetry:* July, 1921 (Vol. XVIII); Aug., 1922 (XX).

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

The Torrent and the Night Before .. Privately printed, Gardiner, Me.: 1896
The Children of the Night ..... Richard G. Badger: 1897
Captain Craig ..... Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1902
* The Children of the Night ..... Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York: 1905
* The Town Down the River ..... Chas. Scribner's Sons: 1910
* Captain Craig ..... Macmillan Co., New York: 1915
* The Man Against the Sky ..... Macmillan Co.: 1916
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Lancelot ..... Thomas Seltzer, N. Y.: 1920

* The Three Taverns.....Macmillan Co.: 1920
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* Collected Poems.....Macmillan Co.: 1921
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ISAAC ROSENBERG (*Died, 1918*)

Youth.....Privately printed, London: 1915
Moses.....Privately printed, London: 1915
* Poems.....Wm. Heinemann, London: 1922
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1916 (Vol. IX).

CARL SANDBURG

* Chicago Poems.....Henry Holt & Co., New York: 1916
* Cornhuskers.....Henry Holt & Co.: 1918
* Smoke and Steel.....Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y.: 1920
Slabs of the Sunburnt West.....Harcourt, Brace & Co.: 1922
In *Poetry:* March, 1914 (Vol. III); June, 1914 (IV); Nov., 1914 (V); Oct., 1915 (VII); April, 1917 (X); Nov., 1917 (XI); July, 1918 (XII); Oct., 1918 (XIII); Feb., 1920 (XV); March, 1922 (XIX).
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LEW SARETT

* Many Many Moons.....Henry Holt & Co., N. Y.: 1920
The Box of God.....Henry Holt & Co.: 1922
In *Poetry:* Nov., 1918 (Vol. XIII); Nov., 1919 (XV); April, 1921 (XVIII).

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

* The Old Huntsman
Wm. Heinemann, London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y.: 1917
* Counter-Attack.....Wm. Heinemann; E. P. Dutton & Co.: 1918
* Picture Show.....Wm. Heinemann; E. P. Dutton & Co.: 1919

ALAN SEEGER (*Died, 1916*)

* Poems.....Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y.: 1917

MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT

* A Woman of Thirty.....Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1919
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1916 (Vol. IX); Nov., 1917 (XI); April, 1918 (XII); Jan., 1919 (XIII); Oct., 1919 (XV); July, 1921 (XVIII).
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CLARA SHANAFELT

In *Poetry:* Oct., 1913 (Vol. III); May, 1915 (VI); June, 1916 (VIII).

FRANCES SHAW

Ragdale Book of Verse.....Privately printed, Lake Forest, Ill.: 1911
Songs of a Baby's Day.....A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago: 1917
In *Poetry:* March, 1914 (Vol. III); July, 1915 (VI); May, 1917 (X); Mar., 1919 (XIII); Feb., 1921 (XVII).

WILLIAM H. SIMPSON

In *Poetry:* May, 1919 (Vol. XIV); Jan., 1920 (XV); May, 1922 (XX).

CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER

In *Poetry:* Oct., 1914 (Vol. V); Jan., 1915 (VII); Feb., 1917 (IX); Feb., 1922 (XIX).

LEONORA SPEYER

A Canopic Jar.....E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y.: 1921
In *Poetry:* July, 1920 (Vol. XVI); Feb., 1922 (XIX); Sept., 1922 (XX).

JAMES STEPHENS

* Insurrections.....Maunsel & Co., Ltd., Dublin: 1909
* Insurrections.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1912
The Hill of Vision.....Maunsel & Co., Ltd.; Macmillan Co.: 1912
* Songs from the Clay.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1914
* The Adventures of Seumas Beg....Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London: 1915
* The Rocky Road to Dublin (same contents as Seumas Beg)
Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1915
Green Branches....Maunsel & Co., Dublin; Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1916
Reincarnations.....Macmillan Co.: 1917
In *Poetry:* Aug., 1914 (Vol. IV).
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GEORGE STERLING

The Testimony of the Suns.....A. M. Robertson, San Francisco: 1903
A Wine of Wizardry.....A. M. Robertson: 1909
The House of Orchids.....A. M. Robertson: 1911
* Beyond the Breakers.....A. M. Robertson: 1914
Yosemite.....A. M. Robertson: 1915
The Evanescent City.....A. M. Robertson: 1915
Ode on Opening of Panama Pacific Exposition.....A. M. Robertson: 1915
The Caged Eagle.....A. M. Robertson: 1916
Sails and Mirage.....A. M. Robertson: 1921
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WALLACE STEVENS

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MARION STROBEL (Mrs. James Herbert Mitchell)

In *Poetry:* March, 1920 (Vol. XV); Feb., 1921 (XVII); March, 1922 (XIX).

AJAN SYRIAN

In *Poetry:* June, 1915 (Vol. VI); Aug., 1918 (XII).

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD (Mrs. Robert L. Wolf)

For Eager Lovers.....Thomas Seltzer, New York: 1922
In *Poetry:* June, 1920 (Vol. XVI); Feb., 1921 (XVII); June, 1921 (XVIII).

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Gitanjali.....Privately printed by the India Society, London: 1912
* Gitanjali.....Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London: 1913
* Gitanjali.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1913
* The Gardener.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1913
Chitra.....India Society, London: 1913
Chitra.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1913
Songs of Kabir (translation).....India Society, London: 1914
Songs of Kabir.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1914
The Crescent Moon.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1914
The Post-office.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1914
The King of the Dark Chamber..Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1914
Fruit-gathering.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1916
Stray Birds.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1916
The Cycle of Spring.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1917
Gitanjali and Fruit-gathering (1 vol., illus'd).....Macmillan Co.: 1918
Lover's Gift and Crossing.....Macmillan Co., N. Y. and London: 1918
Gitanjali (popular ed.).....Four Seas Co., Boston: 1919
Works (Bolpur ed., 10 vols.).....Macmillan Co.: 1919
The Fugitive.....Macmillan Co.: 1921
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1912 (Vol. I); June, 1913 (II); Dec., 1913 (III); Sept., 1916 (VIII).

SARA TEASDALE (Mrs. Ernst Filsinger)

Sonnets to Duse.....Poet-lore Co., Boston: 1907
Helen of Troy and Other Poems....G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York: 1911
* Rivers to the Sea.....Macmillan Co., New York: 1915
* Love Songs.....Macmillan Co.: 1917

Sonnets to Duse.....Four Seas Co., Boston: 1919
* Flame and Shadow.....Macmillan Co.: 1921
In *Poetry:* March, 1914 (Vol. III); Oct., 1915 (VII); June, 1917 (X); April, 1918 (XII); Sept., 1919 (XIV).

EDWARD THOMAS ("Edward Eastaway"—*Died, 1916*)

* Poems.....Henry Holt & Co., N. Y.: 1917
* Last Poems.....Selwyn & Blount, London: 1918
* Collected Poems.....Thomas Seltzer, N. Y.: 1921
In *Poetry:* Feb., 1917 (Vol. IX).

EUNICE TIETJENS (Mrs. Cloyd Head)

* Profiles from China.....Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago: 1917
* Profiles from China.....Alf. A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1919
* Body and Raiment.....Alf. A. Knopf: 1919
In *Poetry:* Sept., 1914 (Vol. IV); Dec., 1914 (V); March, 1915 (V); Dec., 1916 (IX); Aug., 1919 (XIV); Nov., 1920 (XVII); Feb., 1922 (XIX).

RIDGELY TORRENCE

The House of a Hundred Lights.....Small, Maynard & Co., Boston: 1900
El Dorado: A Tragedy.....John Lane Co., New York: 1903
Abelard and Heloise.....Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York: 1907
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1912 (Vol. I); April, 1915 (VI); Jan., 1917 (IX).

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

The Quiet Singer.....Mitchell Kennerley, New York: 1908
Manhattan.....Mitchell Kennerley: 1909
Youth.....Mitchell Kennerley: 1910
* Beyond the Stars and Other Poems.....Mitchell Kennerley: 1912
Today and Tomorrow.....Geo. H. Doran Co., New York: 1916
Autumn Loiterers.....Geo. H. Doran Co.: 1917
In *Poetry:* Nov., 1912 (Vol. I).

MARK TURBYFILL

* The Living Frieze.....Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.: 1922
In *Poetry:* May, 1917 (Vol. X); Aug., 1918 (XII); Oct., 1919 (XV); June, 1921 (XVIII).

JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER

Growing Pains.....B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1918
* Dreams out of Darkness.....B. W. Huebsch: 1921
In *Poetry:* Jan., 1917 (Vol. IX); Sept., 1918 (XII); Nov., 1921 (XIX).

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

The Younger Quire ..... The Moods Publishing Co.: 1911
First Love ..... Sherman French & Co.: 1911
* Challenge ..... Century Co., New York: 1914
". . . and Other Poets" ..... Henry Holt & Co., New York: 1916
These Times ..... Henry Holt & Co.: 1917
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* The New Adam ..... Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y.: 1920
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ALLEN UPWARD

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JOHN V. A. WEAVER

* In American ..... Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y.: 1921
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In *Poetry:* May, 1918 (Vol. XII); Feb., 1920 (XV).

WINIFRED WELLES

* The Hesitant Heart ..... B. W. Huebsch, N. Y.: 1920
In *Poetry:* May, 1922 (Vol. XX).

GLENWAY WESCOTT

* The Bitterns ..... Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill: 1920
In *Poetry:* Sept., 1921 (Vol. XVIII).

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

The Human Fantasy ..... Sherman French & Co., Boston: 1911
* The Beloved Adventure ..... Sherman French & Co.: 1912
* Love and Liberation ..... Sherman French & Co.: 1913
Dust and Light ..... Charles Scribner's Sons, New York: 1919
The Black Panther ..... Charles Scribner's Sons: 1922
In *Poetry:* Aug., 1913 (Vol. II); Nov., 1915 (VII); June, 1917 (X); Sept., 1917 (X); Jan., 1921 (XVII); July, 1922 (XX).

ANNA WICKHAM

* The Contemplative Quarry ..... Poetry Bookshop, London: 1915
* The Man with a Hammer ..... Poetry Bookshop: 1916
The Little Old House ..... Poetry Bookshop: 1918

* The Contemplative Quarry and The Man with a Hammer
Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y.: 1921
In *Poetry:* Jan., 1917 (Vol. IX); July, 1922 (XX).

MARGARET WIDDEMER

* The Factories with Other Lyrics . . John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia: 1915; Henry Holt & Co., New York: 1917
Old Road to Paradise . . . . . Henry Holt & Co.: 1918
Cross-currents . . . . . Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y.: 1922
In *Poetry:* Nov., 1912 (Vol. I); Aug., 1913 (II); Nov., 1914 and Feb., 1915 (V); Oct., 1917 (XI).

FLORENCE WILKINSON (Mrs. Wilfrid Muir Evans)

* The Far Country . . . . . McClure Phillips & Co., New York: 1906
* The Ride Home . . . . . Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston: 1916
In *Poetry:* Dec., 1913 (Vol. III); Jan., 1916 (VII); April, 1920 (XVI); Nov., 1921 (XIX).

MARGUERITE WILKINSON

* In Vivid Gardens . . . . . Sherman French & Co., Boston: 1911
By a Western Wayside . . . . . Privately printed: 1913
Mars, a Modern Morality Play . . . . . Privately printed: 1915
Bluestone . . . . . Macmillan Co.: 1920
In *Poetry:* Nov., 1915 (Vol. VII); Aug., 1916 (VIII).

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

The Tempers . . . . . Elkin Mathews, London: 1913
* Al Que Quiere . . . . . Four Seas Co., Boston: 1917
Kora in Hell: Improvisations . . . . . Four Seas Co.: 1919
* Sour Grapes . . . . . Four Seas Co., Boston: 1922
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YVOR WINTERS

* The Immobile Wind . . . . . Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill., 1921
The Magpie's Shadow . . . . . Munsterbook House, Chicago: 1922
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CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

The Masque of Love . . . . . Walter Hill, Chicago: 1904
* The Poet in the Desert . . . . . Privately printed, Portland, Ore.: 1915

The Poet in the Desert (new version) . . . Privately printed, Portland: 1918
Maia: a Sonnet Sequence (limited illustrated ed.)
Privately printed, Portland, Ore.: 1918
In *Poetry:* Sept., 1919 (Vol. XIV); Dec., 1920 (XVII).

EDITH WYATT

* The Wind in the Corn and Other Poems. . D. Appleton & Co., N. Y.: 1917
In *Poetry:* Jan., 1915 (Vol. V); Dec., 1916 (IX).

ELINOR WYLIE

* Nets to Catch the Wind. . . . . Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y.: 1921
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WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Mosada: A Dramatic Poem. . . . . Privately printed, Dublin: 1886
The Wanderings of Oisin and Other Poems
Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., London: 1889
The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics
T. Fisher Unwin, London: 1892
The Land of Heart's Desire
T. Fisher Unwin, London; Stone & Kimball, Chicago: 1894
Poems. . . . . T. Fisher Unwin, London; Copeland & Day, Boston: 1895
The Wind among the Reeds
John Lane, London: 1899; John Lane Co., N. Y.: 1905
The Shadowy Waters
Hodder & Stoughton, London: 1900; Dodd, Mead & Co., N. Y.: 1901
Plays for an Irish Theatre
A. H. Bullen, London; Maunsel & Co., Dublin: 1903–7
(Vols. I, II, III, and V are plays by W. B. Y.)
In the Seven Woods
Dun Emer Press, Dundrun, Ire.; Macmillan Co., London and N. Y.: 1903
Poems 1899–1905. . . . . A. H. Bullen, London; Maunsel & Co., Dublin: 1906
The Shadowy Waters (Acting version). . . . . A. H. Bullen: 1907
Collected Works in Verse and Prose (8 vols.)
Chapman & Hall, London: 1908
Poetical Works (2 vols.). . . . . Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1908
* The Green Helmet and Other Poems
Cuala Press: 1910; Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1912
A Selection from the Love Poetry of W. B. Y. . . . . Cuala Press: 1913
* Responsibilities—Poems and a Play. . . Cuala Press, Dundrum, Ire.: 1914
* Responsibilities and Other Poems. . . . . Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1916
* The Wild Swans at Coole, Other Verses and a Play in Verse
Cuala Press: 1917; Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1919
* Per Amica Silentiæ Lunæ. . . . . Macmillan Co., London & N. Y.: 1918
Four Plays for Dancers. . . . . Macmillan Co., London & N. Y.: 1921

* Selected Poems.....Macmillan Co., N. Y.: 1921
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MARYA ZATURENSKY

In *Poetry:* April, 1920 (Vol. XV); Sept., 1921 (XVIII).